

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. XI. No. 16.]

LONDON, SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 1807.

[PRICE 10D.]

"I know it may be said, that I and those with whom I have the honour to act, are no more actuated than those on the other side of the House by motives of a pure disinterested nature, though my conscience acquits me of the crime."—Speech of Mr. GREY (now Lord Howick) on moving for a reform of parliament, on the 26th of May, 1797.

577]

[578

## TO THE FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF THE CITY AND LIBERTIES OF WESTMINSTER. LETTER XIII.

GENTLEMEN,

Much as I fear, that these letters of mine must prove wearisome to you, I must beg you to indulge me with your attention, until I have submitted to you all the observations which occur to me, relative to the unconstitutional doctrines, of which the recent change of the king's ministers has caused the open avowal and promulgation. And, Gentlemen, I trust, that I shall not be thought to have led you much astray from the subject wherewith we started; for, now, as when I first had the honour to address you, the state of the representation of the people in parliament, and your interests and duties, as therewith connected, it is my wish to describe and exemplify.

In my last letter I deferred giving you my opinion respecting the *remedy* necessary to be applied, in order to remove the political evils, which we all see and feel. To speak of that remedy, which is at once constitutional, efficacious, and of easy application, I now propose, after having taken a view of what passed in the House of Commons, on Thursday, the 9th instant, when a discussion took place respecting the pledge, which, as the late ministers assert, they were called upon to give to the king, as the sole condition, upon which he would suffer them to retain their places.

This discussion arose from the following motion made by Mr. BRAND: "That it is contrary to the first duties of the Confidential Servants of the Crown to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from offering to the King any advice which the course of circumstances may render necessary for the welfare and security of any part of his Majesty's extensive empire."—This motion was dis-

cussed for a great many hours, at the end of which, as it appears from the report in the newspapers, a division took place, when there were for the motion 226, against it 258; and, of course, the new ministry, at the head of whom is the Duke of Portland, had a majority of 32; though, as you must have observed, Gentlemen, that, while these ministers were *out of office*, they were unable to obtain, at their utmost need, more than about 60 votes! What! what in all the world could have produced this sudden change! what could have induced so many members, who constantly voted with the late ministers, now to vote with their successors? Mr. Perry has positively asserted, that the present parliament was chosen as fairly, and with as much freedom on the part of the people as have ever prevailed at the choosing of any parliament, *since parliaments were known in England!* He has, Gentlemen, positively asserted this; and, the conclusion, according to him, must be, that the majority aforesaid arose purely from the impulse of conscience in the honourable gentlemen composing it, who, of course, were convinced that Mr. Brand's motion ought not to pass, and, that the late ministers, whom they had so long given their support to, were, at last, in the wrong. The result before-mentioned must, too, have convinced Mr. Perry, that he was much mistaken, when he called the new ministers "adventurers for place, without talents, and without interest in the country, men of notorious imbecility and flagrant subserviency;" for, if this description had been true, would they have obtained, in the very first division, a majority over men of such great talents, and that, too, you will please to observe, in a parliament chosen so very fairly and freely, as not to yield, in this respect, to any parliament ever before chosen in England? Time is a great teacher, and, if he has not yet sufficiently instructed Mr. Perry, that gentleman will, I hope, now have the candour to thank me publicly, for the consolation, which I endeavoured to give him, for the balm which I strove to pour



into his wounded soul, through my Register of the 4th instant. I found him alarmed at the prospect of a dissolution of the parliament; I found his imagination disturbed by the dread of a ferment in Ireland, where he appeared to foresee, that the people would rise in a mass in favour of the late ministers; I found him shocked at the idea of "a corrupt traffic in boroughs," which, as he asserted, would be resorted to, I found him seized with horror, at the prospect of new agitations in Middlesex and Westminster; I found his loyal heart sinking within him at the thought of that "jubilee of licentious debate," to which a dissolution might give rise amongst us Jacobins and Levellers. To assuage these torments of his anxious and purely patriotic mind, I used my utmost exertions to convince him, that, for the purpose alluded to, namely, the gaining of a majority over to the new ministers, a dissolution would not be necessary. I reminded him (and I was ashamed to think it necessary to remind him) that reason and reflection were the characteristics of man, as contrasted with the brute creation; that these faculties, which were possessed, in a greater or less degree, by all men not shut up in a mad-house, were, doubtless, possessed by the members of parliament, who, I besought him to remember, were neither stocks nor stones. I pointed out to him the almost irresistible powers of eloquence, especially of a certain sort, employed upon politicians of a certain stamp; and, my conclusion was, that the opportunities for private interviews, for the sweet converse of souls, which would be afforded by a prorogation, particularly during the summer months, when our law-givers would, of course, retire to commune with wisdom and conscience in solitude; my conclusion was, that such opportunities might lead to the producing, in the minds of the members, or, at least, of many of them, a way of thinking, which would induce them to vote for the new ministers, especially as these latter were engaged in protecting the royal conscience from violation, a point upon which we well know, that the members of the House of Commons are nice in the extreme. The event of the debate, of which I am now about to attempt an analysis, has proved, that I was perfectly right; or, that, if I erred at all, it was in supposing that a prorogation was necessary for the purpose in view; for, in the short space of ten days, without scarcely any opportunities for the soft powers of persuasion to operate; without any time for retirement or cogitation; without any other aid than that of their intuitive wisdom and integrity, their perspicacity and decision of

character, they, as it were from sudden inspiration, at once gave their votes on the side of the new ministers. But, Gentlemen, in place of thanking me for having, and, as it now appears, with such correctness of reasoning, endeavoured to quiet his fears of the effects of a dissolution; in place of thanking me, Mr. Perry has, in his oblique way, most outrageously abused me. Nay, which must, I think, surprize you greatly, he has, in all possible ways, expressed his disappointment, his mortification, and his rage, that the new ministers have obtained a majority without a dissolution, rather than which, as it now appears, he would have seen the dreaded "ferment in Ireland," and even the much more dreaded "jubilee suspension of authority" over us Jacobins and Levellers in Middlesex and Westminster. Leaving Mr. Perry, for the present, we will now proceed to the debate.

MR. BRAND, in prefacing his motion, is reported to have said: "When he perceived that pledges had been demanded from the late ministers which were dangerous to the constitution, inimical to the interests of the country, and subversive of the prerogatives of the crown, he felt himself bound to confine his motion to that point. The advice to his majesty, to demand from his ministers a written pledge that they would abstain from giving him advice upon subjects of importance to the security of the empire, must have originated with persons who had no regard to the rights of that house, nor the prerogatives of the crown. His majesty had full discretion to dismiss his councillors, and to choose others in their place, but he could not limit the range of advice which they might give him, and for which they were to be responsible according to the constitution. Where were they to look for responsibility for misrule, misconduct, or mismanagement of the public affairs, if such a pledge were to be given? Where was blame to attach for grievances, upon which ministers might have given a pledge, not to give any advice to his majesty? Ministers might be men of great character and exalted name, but after giving such a pledge, they would not dare to advise their sovereign on such subjects. It would not be becoming in him to delineate the outline of the constitutional principles upon this point. If they were doubtful, it might be proper for him to endeavour to ascertain them; but these principles were admitted, recognized, and supported by the constitutional law of the land. The oath of a privy

"counc  
"Coke,  
"the be  
"conne  
"witho  
"with  
"or let  
"presen  
"of the  
"the pr  
"cillor  
"restrai  
"ment  
"king,  
"would  
"sidered  
"stitutio  
"who  
"they  
"might  
"but re  
"it wou  
"had co  
"effects  
"ing th  
"mean  
"measu  
"attent  
"to the  
"nor of  
"their  
"trade.  
"dange  
"from t  
"fore, s  
"As Mr.  
"into any  
"the la  
"subject  
"in ende  
"abolition  
"sibly hav  
"the king  
"from ob  
"before,  
"will, at  
"this cou  
"pointed  
"throwing  
"French,  
"the meas  
"bring do  
"them; a  
"whether  
"dom, ch  
"but, I t  
"that Sir  
"French p  
"he has t  
"do not  
"throw o



"councillor, as reported by Sir Edward Coke, bound him to advise his majesty to the best of his judgment upon all matters connected with the interests of his realms, without exception or partiality, and also with secrecy, and not to publish by word or letter what passed in council. The present oath, which was only a translation of the old oath, was equally binding upon the privy councillor. But if a privy councillor was to subscribe to any pledge to restrain his advice, he would sign judgment upon the violation of his oath to his king, his country, and his God. He would be ashamed to argue what he considered as the axiomatic law of the constitution; but as there might be some who might admit the principle, whilst they advised the infraction of it, who might allow the law of the constitution, but recommend its subversion, he thought it would be right to declare that law. He had confined himself to the immediate effects and future dangers of the proceeding that had taken place, and did not mean to go into any consideration of the measures of the late administration, *their attention to the liberty of the subject*, and to the rights and comforts of the people, nor of the benevolence that characterised their act for *the abolition of the slave trade*. When the constitution was in danger, he thought it not right to depart from the immediate question, and, therefore, should conclude with moving."—

As Mr. Brand did not think proper to go into any account of the "attention which the late ministers paid to the *liberty of the subject*;" nor will we lose our time in endeavouring to find out what the *abolition of the Slave Trade* could possibly have to do with the pledge demanded of the king's servants; but, I cannot refrain from observing, as I frequently have done before, that the abolition of the Slave Trade will, at best, do no good to the people of this country, except, indeed, in the way pointed out by Sir Thomas Turtton, that, by throwing the trade into the hands of the French, we might thereby the sooner fill up the measure of their iniquity, and, of course, bring down the vengeance of heaven upon them; an idea of which it is difficult to say, whether it had its origin in legislative wisdom, christian charity, or pious devotion; but, I think, it will be unanimously agreed, that Sir Thomas's is a way of fighting the French perfectly original; and, seeing, that he has taken up the affairs of India, I really do not despair of hearing him propose to throw our manifold sins in that country also

into the measure of our enemy's transgressions. To come back to the debate; I think, that Mr. Brand, if the above report of his speech be correct, confounded the office of *privy-councillor* with that of the office of *minister*, or servant of the king. At the time when Sir Edward Coke wrote his famous book upon the laws of England, the king had nothing belonging to him resembling in the most distant degree what we now call a *ministry*; and, indeed, it was not until after the Revolution, at which time the Whigs, as they are called, began to rule in a body, that such a thing as is now called a *ministry* existed. The duty of a *privy-councillor* is to advise the king in all matters whatever, and at all times, whether he hold any other office under the Crown, or not. The privy council, which, by way of eminence is called *The Council*, is a thing known to the constitution of our government, and is, perhaps, nearly as ancient as the parliament itself. The *Cabinet Council* is a thing quite unknown to that constitution; and, until very lately, has never been named in the parliament. It was not as members of the privy council, that the king demanded a pledge of the late ministers. They were, indeed, members of the privy council; but, there are forty, or more, members of that council; and, if the pledge had been demanded of them, as such, it would, of course, have been, by implication, at least, demanded of the whole of the members of the council. But, and this puts the matter in a light not to be misunderstood, of the late ministers it was demanded to sign the pledge, or to give up their places. They refused the demand; they were dismissed from their places; but, *still they are privy councillors*; from the privy council they are not dismissed; they may still give their advice, as privy councillors, upon all matter whatever; and this clearly shows, that the pledge was demanded of them merely as servants of the king. Whether they, being also privy councillors, could, without a violation of their privy councillor's oath, have given the pledge, is another matter, but, Gentlemen, as the ministers had, at the mere suggestion of the king, abandoned the only measure, at which the pledge pointed; as they had given way here, as they had actually withdrawn a bill which they have declared to be absolutely necessary to the safety of the nation; as they, who had introduced this bill amidst the applauses of the House of Commons, could, at the bare expression of the king's disapprobation, do this, notwithstanding their oaths as privy councillors, one can hardly see why they



should lay such stress upon that oath, as an obstacle to their proposing to the king any other such measure; unless, indeed, we are inclined to admit, that, so curious is the nature of this oath, that it binds you to advise what it permits you to abandon the very next moment. In their minute of council, they claim a right to submit to the king whatever measures they may think requisite for the good of the country. What was the use of this minute? They possessed the right. The king had expressed no doubt of it; and the minute had no meaning at all, if it did not mean, that, though they had abandoned the particular measure now, they were resolved to renew it again. "So far from that," says the king, "I demand of you a pledge, that you never will renew it again." This pledge they cannot give; their oath will not let them; but, the very same oath leaves them free to abandon the measure the moment they have advised it, if they find it grating to "the personal feelings of the king." Observe here, again, the nice discrimination of their consciences, which will not suffer them to abstain from giving advice, on account of the feelings of the king; but which, for the sake of sparing those feelings, will freely suffer them to prevent that advice from having any effect. Under this view of the subject, I should have seen no necessity for the adopting of Mr. Brand's motion, and I really wonder, that such a motion should have been supported by men, who had expressed such extreme sensibility towards the "feelings of their gracious master," that being, I think, the phrase recently most in vogue amongst them. It is truly astonishing that men, who, while in place, could, out of pure regard for the feelings of the king withdraw a bill from before parliament, which bill they thought indispensably necessary to the safety of the nation, should, the moment they were out of place, have supported a motion, declaring that which the king had demanded to be contrary to the first duties of his ministers, than which nothing more hostile to the feelings of the king could I think well have been imagined.

So much for the merits of the question before the House; but, there were some other topics, which arose during the debate, upon which, Gentlemen, I must request your permission to offer a few short remarks, as tending, either directly or indirectly, towards the elucidation of the great point which I always endeavour to keep in view, and in which alone either you or I have any real interest.—Mr. MAURICE FITZGERALD was of opinion that there was not a single

sentence in the resolution, nor a single part of the conduct of ministers, which derogated from the prerogative of the crown. If the prerogative had been infringed, it had been infringed by those who would destroy the responsibility of ministers. He entered into an examination of the recent proceedings of the late administration, and contended, that had they acted differently, they would have been guilty of a dereliction of their trust. It was an administration of talents, of consideration, and possessing the confidence of the country. By every man in the empire, therefore, it was to be lamented, that the services of such men should be lost to the country. He described the state of Ireland as very hazardous, deprecated the total ignorance, and even, he feared, the apathy, on this subject, and wished that he was of sufficient importance to rouse the attention of the House to the consideration of this question, namely, whether they would command the services of four or five millions of people, or hazard their enmity.—This speech, as curtailed by the reporters, is very short, but full of matter; and, to say the truth, those reporters are exceedingly clever and judicious at this work of curtailing. They frequently sit sweating under a speech of several hours; and then down they clap all the substantial parts of it in half as many minutes; inasmuch that some very shrewd men have been of opinion, that it would be of great convenience, if the several orators were to commune with the reporters before hand; but, this opinion, if acted upon, would not only put an end to parliamentary oratory, but would very little comport with the dignity of either House, and we know, from Pitt and Lord Howick, that that is an object of great importance.—Taking Mr. Fitzgerald's points in their due order, our attention is first attracted by the anxiety expressed by the honourable gentleman, lest it should be thought, that the motion tended, even in the smallest degree, to derogate from the prerogative of the crown; and, we have, indeed, observed, from the beginning to the end of the discussions, both in doors and out of doors, relating to the dismissal of the ministers, the most earnest solicitude on their part, and on the part of their partisans, to deny, that, in any respect whatever, they were not submissive enough to the king. "They did," said Mr. Perry, "they did withdraw the bill the moment they found it unpleasant to the king. They did not wish for parliament to controul his will. We assert, we boldly assert," (pray, ob-

serve  
"boldly  
"min  
"of  
"sure  
"ne  
"to  
den of  
he con  
had be  
news-P  
the te  
scandal  
Why,  
(all m  
in wor  
parlian  
from  
necess  
was the  
who ha  
such m  
of cour  
them u  
repres  
to defe  
men, v  
ed to f  
—W  
pledge  
"resp  
before  
an ala  
how r  
respon  
Perry  
us the  
that  
"men  
"can  
"of  
"con  
"resp  
"tha  
"par  
And t  
of the  
have h  
Fitzge  
the pr  
to the  
to his  
be the  
sume,  
Howi  
nation  
sponsi  
thing  
minis  
as it l  
the la



serve the extent of this boldness), "we *boldly* assert, that the ministers, in the "minute of council, did *not* claim the right "of submitting to *parliament* such measures as they might deem indispensably "necessary to the safety of the nation, but "to the king only;" and, this was the burden of Lord Howick's famous complaint; he complained, that he and his colleagues had been scandalously *misrepresented* by a news-paper *libeller* (mark, and remember the terrible word); and, what was this scandalous, this *libellous* misrepresentation? Why, that Lord Howick and his colleagues (all members of parliament, observe) had, in words, asserted their right to submit to parliament whatever measures they might, from time to time, deem indispensably necessary to the safety of the country. This was the *libellous* misrepresentation of them, who had only asserted their right to submit such measures to the king alone, being ready, of course, to abandon them, if they found them unpleasant to him. Against this *misrepresentation* it is that they have solaboured to defend themselves in the eyes of Englishmen, whom they are, nevertheless, surprised to find totally indifferent as to their fate. —With regard to the effect which the pledge would have had in "destroying the "responsibility of ministers," as the speech before us seems to apprehend, that would be an alarming evil indeed! We have seen how real, how efficient, how active this responsibility is in practice, and Mr. James Perry has, within this week or two, given us the modern theory of it, which is this, that "resolutions of censure, and impeachments, are now become obsolete; that they "can never have place but in the feverish fits "of the constitution; and that, when the "constitution is in its *healthful* state, the real "responsibility of ministers consists in this, "that, when they lose the *confidence* of "parliament, they *must quit their places*." And that is all! That is the whole history of the famous responsibility, of which we have heard so much, and which Mr. Maurice Fitzgerald is afraid would be destroyed by the precedent of ministers giving a pledge to the king not to offer him advice contrary to his wishes. If the doctrine of Mr. Perry be the right doctrine; and, we may presume, that it is the doctrine of my Lord Howick and his colleagues, what will the nation lose by the destruction of this responsibility? Besides, we now see that the thing is going on at full swing; for the late ministers *lost the confidence of parliament*, as it has been proved, clearly proved, upon the last division; they lost their places too;

and there was the ultimate and complete effect of the responsibility. Now, none of your shuffling, Mr. Perry; here we have you fast; get out of the hobble if you can. —Of that *universal lamentation*, which Mr. Fitzgerald talks of, as arising from the dismissal of the late ministers, and of the *apathy* which he perceives to exist upon the subject of that dismissal, which are, doubtless, perfectly reconcileable in his mind, we will speak, after we have spent a moment or two in admiration of the astonishing effect, which he seems to suppose the bill recently withdrawn would have produced; no less than that of commanding *the services of four or five millions* of people. Now, though I cannot possibly see any *harm* that the bill would have done, except that of gaining those who joined with the Pitts in order to stifle your voice at the last election; though, the gaining of them some degree of unmerited support is all the *harm* that I can see it possible for the bill to have produced, I can really see *no good* that it could have done, or that any other than a mere visionary projector could have anticipated from it. "Four or five millions of people!" Why, including even the infants in embryo, the Roman Catholics in this kingdom do not amount to more than about *three millions*; and, I think, it may be safely affirmed, that, of those three millions, not three thousand, at the very utmost, would have thanked the king for acceding to the measure proposed. "To tranquillize Ireland," indeed! Tranquillize two or three millions of half-starved, half-naked, half-barbarous people! To the *principle* of the bill I have nothing to object; but, to ascribe to it such amazing practical effects is, surely, most strangely to exaggerate. The state of Ireland is, indeed, full as alarming as the late ministers now describe it; though we cannot but recollect, how earnestly they deprecated all discussion upon the subject, and even all allusion to it, no longer than about four months ago. But, the discontents, the heart-burnings of Ireland, are not to be cured by such means. The giving the Irish Catholics what is called complete emancipation would not, in my opinion, allay those discontents for an hour amongst the great body of the people, though it might gratify and even pacify a few of the principal persons of that sect. Since I have understood any thing of the matter, I have always remained convinced, that Ireland stands in need of something very different from a law merely to enrich, or ennoble, a few scores of men. It is the whole *state* of Ireland; it is the *system of governing Ireland*, that all



men, when they speak their minds, say ought to be changed. To refuse the oath of supremacy is the mere test of discontent at other things. The persons who refuse would have some other test, if they had not that. If the Pope himself were installed in Ireland, the same system of rule still continuing, those who now contend for his supremacy, would combine against him. The feelings of the people of Ireland are those of a people oppressed by their conquerors; but, these feelings are not of recent origin. All that they have had at the hands of the present king, at any rate, is concession. They are oppressed by numerous ills, arising from various causes; and, to suppose, that these could be cured by heightening the ladder of promotion for a few officers in the Army and Navy is, in my opinion, absurd. One of the evils in the state of Ireland, and one, too, of the most mischievous tendency, is, *the flagrant non-residence of the Protestant clergy*; for, even here in England I, for my part, know of few things so grating to the heart of man as the being compelled to yield one-tenth part of the produce of his fields to enrich, or, at least, support a person, who ought to be continually resident in the parish, but who never shows his face in it. This is a point upon which Mr. Perceval stands virtually pledged; and, unless he has the same way of getting rid of his pledges as Mr. Sheridan and Lord Howick and Mr. Whitbread and Lord Erskine had, he will surely do something in this way. If he can enforce residence in Ireland; or, if he only does, in Ireland, what his bill of last year (which our friends, the *reformers*, threw out) proposed to do in England, he will do more towards the tranquillizing of that country, than has ever yet been done, or attempted to be done. That is the path for him to proceed in, and not in that of "*extraordinary exertions of the law*;" for, he may, I think, count upon it as a certainty, that every such exertion will be an exertion in favour of France. I, for my part, do not think that mere religious concessions to the Roman Catholics would do any good. Experience has proved, that they have done no good hitherto; but, that, in the present state of Europe, leaving justice and humanity out of the question, policy calls for something to be done for Ireland nobody will deny. It is quite useless to call the Irish by hard names, to revile them as malcontents and rebels; there they are, they are pretty near to us, and, as we cannot make them cease to exist, we must either induce them to love us, or make up our minds to have their hatred with all its possible and probable consequences. A

correspondent of mine, after having very ably described the non-efficiency of the bill in question, proposes, as a grand remedy for the evils existing in Ireland, to send *Mr. Hastings*, of all men living, to be the viceroy of that country! To this I should object, because that gentleman was the ruler of slaves once in his life time. But, it is not in Ireland, any more than here, that a change of rulers is wanted; it is a change in the system of rule, by which I do not mean, a change in the name or the form of the government; but a change in the manner of conducting it, and especially in the manner of raising and expending the public money; and which change, so far from impairing the constitutional strength and permanency of the throne, would strengthen and confirm them. This it is that is wanted. This work, which is not the work of a day, once well *begun* only, all our apprehensions, and dreadful apprehensions they are, about Ireland, would be at an end; but, unless something in this way be attempted, we may consider as mere sublimated reveries all the talk about "extracting the means of defence from the bowels of discontent."—Sir THOMAS TURTON, who, though he has taken in hand the questions respecting Marquis Wellesley, found time to reflect upon the subject of the debate before us, said, that "the late ministers had talked a good deal about pledges to the Catholics, though they had not hesitated to postpone the redemption of their many other pledges, such as that for a *parliamentary reform*, &c. &c. &c. &c. &c."—This was the blow, Gentlemen, and not the less severe on account of the hand, from which it came. Well must you remember, Gentlemen, these pledges. Well must you remember the descriptions which the late ministers, the famous Whigs, gave of the House of Commons, as at present constituted. Often have I had the book of their speeches thereon before me; often have I taken up the pen to make extracts from it; but, as often have I dropped it again, and with still itching fingers, threw away the book of temptation, when I recollected, that Pitt, whose conduct and character they have, since they succeeded to his power, so constantly eulogized, saw prosecuted for sedition, and even for treason, those, who, as the judge himself declared, had only endeavoured to effect such a reform as Pitt had asserted to be absolutely necessary to the preservation of any thing like liberty in England. Yes, Gentlemen, Sir Thomas Turton struck them to the heart. It was so good, so sweet to the ears of us, who had



felt the effects of their reforming spirit at Westminster and in Hampshire, to hear them reminded of this their great and forfeited pledge. And to hear it come, too, not from any of our brethren, the Jacobins and Levellers, but from a Pittite, from a partizan of that "illustrious statesman," from "a friend of government, of social order, and of our holy religion," as the phrase is with John Bowles and Redhead Yorke. If all sense of feeling was not gone, how must they have felt at that moment! Making the change of a word or two in the exclamation of the fallen Woolsey, they must have said in their hearts: "had we but served the people with but half as much zeal as we have eulogized Pitt, they would not thus have treated us in the wane of our fortunes." Here is their great sin, and here, too, is the *real* cause of their fall. Mr. Fitzgerald seems to think, that their dismissal has spread *universal lamentation* over the country; and yet he laments the *apathy* that prevails. Not one sensible and disinterested man laments their fall; and the apathy is complete indeed. The change has been productive of much exultation, on the one side, of much chagrin, on the other, and of unprecedented bitterness amongst place-men and place-hunters, and also amongst a few honest fools who yet, from habit rather than from reason, lend their lungs or their pens, to one party or the other; but, amongst the people at large, it has produced neither sorrow nor pleasure, and the only feeling that has arisen from it has been merely that of a momentary satisfaction at seeing the late ministers punished, and that, too, in the most appropriate of all ways, for their political apostacy; their eulogizing of Pitt, and their mockery of the country for expecting them to act up to their professions. They now tell us, after all their twenty years of professions and of pledges; after all the hopes which they excited with respect to a reform of abuses, and an amendment in our internal situation, including every thing that is, or that ought to be, dear to us; they now tell us that they had, when they came into power, *two* great objects in view; and what were these, forsooth, but *the restoring of peace to troubled Europe*, and *the abolition of the slave trade*, than which the reduction of one single sinecure place, the relieving us from one single tax-gatherer, would be, beyond all comparison, of more importance to us. How are we to restore peace to troubled Europe? The scourge is sweeping on, and sweep it will, in spite of us; and, as to the abolition of the slave-trade, allow-

ing it to be a good, which I deny, it is not a good *unto us*, who have, besides, amongst our own countrymen and our own colour of skin, a sufficiency of objects for our compassion, the number of our English paupers being three times as great as the number of slaves in all our West-India Islands. Aye, Gentlemen, these were the two great objects that they had in view, and it fortunately happened that by neither of them would any place or emolument have been touched, nor any source of corrupt influence dried up, or diminished. It is so good, it is so just, that, after all their praises of Pitt, after all their uncalled-for praises of his schemes and his character, after all their abandonment of the people, they should have been taunted with their apostacy by the Pittites themselves. Had they been true to their promises, had they made a stand upon some measure for the relief of the people, or for the restoration of those rights, of which they formerly talked so much, then, indeed, would there have been "universal lamentation" at their dismissal; but, the bill, upon which they split, even supposing them not to have abandoned it, was no such measure: it was a measure which would not have been felt by us, while it would have added to their own influence. Not a single measure, in their view of it, did they propose, favourable to the people; for even their putting a stop to new taxes was, by them, *intended* to perpetuate the system of funding and taxing. Of all this they were well aware; but they scoffed at our disappointment, mortification, and indignation, to which we dared not, and yet dare not, give utterance in suitable terms. They said in their hearts, "let them fume; let their anger consume them; we hate the Pitts, as much as ever, but we hate them as rivals for power and emolument, and not as we hate those, who would tear up corruption by the very roots." Scarcely were they seated in their places, when we heard them begin to talk of their disregard of "popular clamour;" of their resolution to do their duty, "heedless of what unreasonable men might think of them;" and their chief supporter, Mr. Perry, has treated us with several very serious dissertations upon the danger of listening to wild theoretic men, who know nothing of the difficulties which those have to overcome who are burdened with the management of state affairs. The growth of *wholesome* reform is, we have been told, like that of the oak, slow and sure; and that none but thoughtless hot-headed men could expect "his Majesty's government" (for that is a



very fashionable phrase) to do every thing at once. No: we knew they could not do every thing at once; nay, we might have excused them for some part of what they did not do; but, for their doubling of the income tax, while, at the same time, they added enormously to the pensions of the Royal Family and exempted the king's funded property from the operation of the income tax; for these and for many other of their acts of commission, and, above all others, for their incessant praises of Pitt and his system, it was impossible for us to find an excuse. To praise Pitt and the Pitt system of taxation and of funding, to vote the payment of his debts expressly upon the *score of his merits*, was so galling, so cruel, so outrageous an insult to us, who had supported them for the very cause that they attacked that same Pitt and that same system, that it is not in the heart of man to forgive it. How justly, how fitly, are they punished, overthrown as they are, not by us, but by the followers of Pitt, who revile them, too, for having attempted to do, though in a smaller degree, that which Pitt himself attempted to do! If they had begun by a steady adherence to their pledges; if they had said, "have a little patience, and we will perform all that we promised you;" had they made a *beginning* only, we should have been patient. But, no; they scoffed at us. They told us of nothing but their power; and, by their acts they showed, that they praised Pitt's system, because they found it to suit their purpose. There is a singular fitness in the whole of their punishment. The *Wellesleys* form a part of their successors. Let Mr. Paull complain no more. He is amply avenged on them for all their treatment of him and his cause. They took the Pitts to their bosom. All those, who were willing to be subservient to them, they embraced with eager arms; and these Pitts it is who have now crushed them, not forgetting to revile them for the forfeiture of their pledges to us, the people of England.

This appropriate hit of Sir Thomas Turton has led me to wander so far from the debate, that I hardly know where I left off. I must, however, return to it; for there are several points remaining unnoticed; and, besides, it would be unpardonable, and would certainly subject me to a charge of inattention to "dignity," were I to pass over the speech imputed to my lord Howick.

But, first, let us notice the speech of Mr. ROMILLY, the late Solicitor General, apparently a very able man, and, by all account, a man of excellent principles. He

said, "that, to choose his own ministers is, no doubt, the prerogative of the crown. By that prerogative the king can call any man he pleases to his councils. Even a man in whom that house has no confidence. He may call to his service a man who has been convicted by that house of a gross violation of the law, who has been brought to trial and acquitted; but so acquitted, that not one of his powerful friends in that house had ever yet ventured to move the rescinding of the resolutions which stood against him; who could not come into the other house of parliament without reading in the looks of men around him the sentence passed upon him, and who must still have resounding in his ears the words, 'guilty; upon my honour.' But then the ministers were responsible for that exercise of the prerogative, otherwise the constitution was no more: the king would be absolute, and the House of Commons lose its dearest privileges."—What, then, do the dearest privileges of the House really consist in a right of demanding, at the hands of some one, an account of the king's choice of his servants? Is this their dearest privilege? Verily it is one of very little importance to the people. That the speech before us aimed at Lord Melville there can be no doubt; but, as often as such allusions are made by the Whigs, so often will I remind them, that they voted the payment of Pitt's debts, expressly upon the *score of his merits*, and that they have, from the day they came into power, been constantly eulogizing the character and conduct of Pitt, who, all the world must agree, was a full participator in all the acts attributed to Lord Melville. What did Lord Melville do? What was proved against him? Why, that he suffered the public money to be, for a time, diverted from the service of the public, and used for the profit of individuals. Well, and was it not proved to the House, upon the oaths of good witnesses, that Pitt was, during the time that Lord Melville so acted, apprized of it? Nay, was it not also proved, that, in one particular instance he himself took 40 thousand pounds of the naval money, and lent it to Boyd and Benfield, two members of the then parliament, without interest, without consulting his colleagues, and also without causing any minute to be made of the transaction? Forty thousand pounds of this very money he lent to two of his loan-contractors to enable them to make good their bargain; forty thousand pounds of the public money, without interest, to enable two members of parliament

to lend which of its the W them What ers ab suppor demnit that b same were t against of this were, a shar fice; a ville w them. sently was ex the V were i of the lieve t the bi I beca cool v ville; basest pular down escape by th know fess, but o have publi know time them nel; well at ev ended most which and, obtai sente follo anni he w all c the who to a the who to t



to lend that money to the poor public itself, which public had to *pay interest* for the use of its own money so lent to it! All this the Whigs well knew; they had it before them upon oath; and what did they do? What did these lovers of justice, these talkers about *responsibility* do? Why, they supported; nay they *proposed* a bill of *indemnity* for the conduct of Pitt, and for that bill they unanimously voted in that same House of Commons, where they were then moving articles of impeachment against Lord Melville! What was the cause of this? Why, it is now known, that *they were, at that time, negotiating with Pitt for a share of the powers and emoluments of office*; and unless the powers of Lord Melville was destroyed, there was no room for them. Lord Howick says, as we shall presently see, that no influence of government was exerted against Lord Melville. No; the Whigs had no motive for it after they were in power; and so great is my opinion of their christian charity, that I really believe they rejoiced at his acquittal. After the bill of indemnity for the conduct of Pitt, I became, as the public may remember, very cool with respect to the case of Lord Melville; for I held it to be partiality of the basest description to take advantage of popular opinion for the purpose of hunting him down, while Pitt was not only suffered to escape, but was complimented and praised by the pursuers.—These Whigs do, I know, accuse me of impatience, and I confess, that I am, in some cases, impatient; but of this bad quality they, at any rate, have no reason to complain, as, I think, the public must be convinced. But the public know very little of my forbearance. At the time just mentioned, I remonstrated with them in private, through an infallible channel; I represented to them the impolicy as well as the injustice of their proceedings; at every stage of their political apostacy I endeavoured, in the most earnest and yet most respectful manner, to prevent that which has finally produced their overthrow, and, having, after they came into power, obtained an audience of Mr. Fox, I represented to him the inevitable consequence of following the example of Pitt, namely, the annihilation of not only the party of which he was the head, but also the annihilation of all confidence, on the part of the people, in the then existing race of public men. He who was, in his nature, kind and indulgent to a fault, who was wonderfully gifted in the faculty of perceiving and of judging, whose heart and mind were always disposed to the right side, and who only wanted, as

Major Cartwright observes, “the resolution to *say nay to bad men*,” heard me with patience and with attention; but I gathered from the arguments he made use of to quiet my fears, that he had no longer any confidence in his powers of effecting any thing great for the country. In answer to all the reproaches of the Whigs, I might appeal to the gradual public warnings that I gave them; but, I further assert, that, at every stage of their dereliction, I remonstrated privately; I told them that if their impatience for office produced an abandonment of their principles, their power would be of short duration, and they would fall unregretted. That I was right in my judgment, they may now, perhaps, have the justice to say to themselves, if they have not the candour publicly to acknowledge it. The cause of their fall, and especially the cause of their falling unregretted, is to be ascribed entirely to the compromise that they have submitted to in order to obtain power and emolument; and, oh! how often have I, publicly as well as privately, remonstrated against any and every such compromise not only as fatal to the country, but as fatal, as totally ruinous, to themselves! “They *wished to do good, they wished to relieve the country*,” aye, and Baalam *wished to do right, when, for hire, he cursed where he should have blessed, and blessed where he should have cursed*. “They *wished to do good, they wished to relieve the country*,” but, they made us pay the debts, they eulogized the conduct and character, they adopted and pursued the system of Pitt. To this charge, a charge which I will never cease to prefer against them as long as they keep their heads above, or as long as they shall at times make them appear through, the troubled surface of politics, I should be glad to hear *their answer*. I will give it publicity equal to the publicity of the charge; but, I forewarn them, that they must find something far better than the pleadings of their advocate, Mr. Perry, which amount to neither more nor less than an assertion, that a combination of interests and a compromise of principles, amongst great men, are, in this “the *healthful state of the constitution*,” necessary to counter-balance the power of the throne, than which a more detestable doctrine never was preached, the people and their representatives being, by such doctrine, totally excluded from any share in the real powers of the state, and no choice being left us but that of being governed by an absolute monarch, or an aristocracy as absolute, and ten thousand times more oppressive.



In returning once more to the debate, we find, in the speech of MR. PERCEVAL, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, a minute and sort of official account of the steps which led to the dismissal of the late ministers, and, as such, it is worthy of particular attention. He said, "That it would, he conceived, be convenient in the discussion to consider the measure which had been the occasion of the dismissal in three stages: First, when the application had been made for his majesty's consent to bring it in; secondly, when it had been brought in in a shape very different from that in which his majesty had understood and sanctioned it; and thirdly, when it was withdrawn, and the circumstances attending that proceeding. As to the first, it was quite clear that his majesty could have understood the original intention only as meant to extend the provisions of the Irish Act of 1793 to Great Britain, by means of clauses in the Mutiny Act. The first dispatch to his Majesty, turning on the anomalies of the law in Ireland and Great Britain, and on the obligation of the pledge given in Ireland in an extension of the law of that country to this, and then the use of the words, of the Irish act in that dispatch, that is, to grant all commissions, and all the arguments offered to gain his Majesty's consent tended to shew that nothing more was meant at that time than to extend that act to this country. This was rendered still more clear and unquestionable by the change which was introduced into the expressions when it began to be in the contemplation of the late Ministers to grant more than was granted by the Irish Act. Then the former expression of commissions was omitted, for it did not apply to the Staff, and the words "warrants and appointments" were introduced into the Bill. It was besides to be considered, that it was not till after much reasoning that his Majesty had been induced to withdraw his dissent from the original proposition; and that his Majesty had then declared, that nothing should ever induce him to go one step, further. His Majesty, at the same time, expressed a hope, that his forbearance in this instance would save him from being pressed further upon a subject upon which his mind was unalterably made up against all further concession. It was not his Majesty alone that understood the original intention in the limited sense of extending the Irish Act to this country. The person who was employed in Ireland (Mr. Elliot) to communicate with the Catholics did not feel

himself authorised to give any larger understanding till he had referred to his principals for explanation, and the noble lord employed to communicate to his Majesty (lord Sidmouth,) had understood it merely as a measure to get rid of an anomaly between the laws of different parts of the empire. He believed the noble lord opposite (Howick) when he stated a different understanding on his own part; but the right hon. baronet, late Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland, had given some sanction to the other belief, when, in opposing the delay of the proceedings on the bill, which was urged by some on the ground of the absence of the Irish members, the hon. baronet stated that the bill was already law in Ireland, and already sanctioned by the Irish members. But there was a still further sanction in the understanding of his Majesty, as three members of the late cabinet were under the same difficulty. (A communication from the other side, across the table, only two.) He begged pardon; he thought the Lord Chancellor, The Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and the Lord President (Sidmouth) had been dissentient to the exclusion beyond the limits of the Irish Act; but he found that the Lord Chancellor had not been summoned on the second day, and he thought it not so right that the lord who had the particular guardianship of the king's conscience should have been omitted in the order of summons; and still further he thought it right that the dissentient members of the council, as well as the consentient should be summoned, in order that the king might have the benefit of hearing the opinion of those who confirmed as well as the opinions of those who invalidated his principles, with respect to the church, which were known to have been heretofore unaltered. Having established that when it was a thing unknown to some of his majesty's cabinet ministers, and to the minister in Ireland, charged to negotiate this particular point, that it was intended to exceed the Irish Act of 1793, it was not extraordinary that his majesty himself should have been at a loss to understand the extent of the proposed measure. Here he closed the first point of the question, contenting himself with having clearly established, that his majesty had no knowledge in the first instance of its being intended to carry the measure so far as was afterwards proposed. As to the time when the measure was introduced into the house in its pre-

" sent  
" made  
" Mar  
" patch  
" statin  
" be co  
" with  
" hope  
" gener  
" not,  
" nor  
" who  
" be a  
" addit  
" tious  
" porat  
" ation  
" law.  
" tellig  
" but  
" its m  
" out a  
" or ov  
" preci  
" was  
" the  
" cum  
" arose  
" back  
" led t  
" jesty  
" mod  
" jesty  
" that  
" tion  
" to t  
" by t  
" draw  
" whi  
" a m  
" ged  
" wou  
" sing  
" fron  
" effi  
" des  
" kno  
" pub  
" nist  
" the  
" to  
" fav  
" ger  
" Cat  
" he  
" wh  
" cas  
" nis  
" sho  
" we  
" ow



597]

“ sent extent, no communication had been  
 “ made to his majesty on that subject till 3d  
 “ March. In the intermediate time, dis-  
 “ patches had been laid before his majesty,  
 “ stating that the Irish Catholics would not  
 “ be content with the measure then pending,  
 “ without large additional concessions. The  
 “ hope of keeping back the agitation of the  
 “ general Petition of the Catholics, could  
 “ not, in the opinion of the lord lieutenant,  
 “ nor of the lord chancellor of Ireland,  
 “ who was more particularly concerned,  
 “ be accomplished without granting in  
 “ addition to the Officer's Bill, the situa-  
 “ tions of sheriffs and members of cor-  
 “ porations to the gentry, and the situ-  
 “ ations of king's counsel in the courts of  
 “ law. The dispatch, containing this in-  
 “ telligence was certainly sent to the king,  
 “ but without any precise notification of  
 “ its meaning; and here he must say, with-  
 “ out any charge of intention to circumvent,  
 “ or overreach the king, that the want of  
 “ precision and explanation that existed  
 “ was the cause of all, or a great part of  
 “ the difficulties that were found to in-  
 “ cumber this question. When the doubts  
 “ arose in Ireland, and the dispatch sent  
 “ back with a view to remove those doubts  
 “ led to a more clear disclosure of his ma-  
 “ jesty's mind, it was attempted first to  
 “ modify the proposed measure to his ma-  
 “ jesty's wish; but when it was found that  
 “ that could not be done with the satisfac-  
 “ tion which it was at first proposed to give  
 “ to the Catholics, it was thought better  
 “ by the advocates of the measure to with-  
 “ draw it. And here was a point upon  
 “ which the late ministers had overlooked  
 “ a material duty indeed. After they had ur-  
 “ ged that the importance of this business  
 “ would not admit of its being postponed a  
 “ single day, they had, he would not say  
 “ from the motive, but certainly with the  
 “ effect of keeping their places, by the od-  
 “ dest sacrifice that had ever before been  
 “ known, the sacrifice of private feeling to  
 “ public principle. His majesty's late mi-  
 “ nisters claimed a right, in withdrawing  
 “ the measure lately before the house,  
 “ to state their sentiments strongly in  
 “ favour of that measure, and of a  
 “ general system of favour towards the  
 “ Catholics. This was the strangest plan  
 “ he had ever known; and he wished those  
 “ who were so anxious to guard against the  
 “ case of a crown, without responsible mi-  
 “ nisters, to consider in what situation we  
 “ should be, if the ministers in this case  
 “ were allowed to come down and state their  
 “ own case against their sovereign, to say

“ they were favourable, and they were right,  
 “ but his Majesty opposed them, and they  
 “ were obliged to concede. Was not that  
 “ the fact? and he was sure the noble lord  
 “ would support himself in nothing but the  
 “ fact, and every thing he saw and heard  
 “ confirmed the impression he had stated.  
 “ What responsibility then had the house to  
 “ look to? The late ministers would have  
 “ said, if the pledge had not been required,  
 “ we are strongly for the measure, but the  
 “ king is strongly against it, and therefore  
 “ we must give way. In such a situation,  
 “ what responsibility would parliament have  
 “ to look to? His majesty here contented  
 “ himself upon this too, with regretting  
 “ that his ministers should have opinions  
 “ different from his, and with lamenting  
 “ the necessity of introducing discussions  
 “ so improper; but when the right of sub-  
 “ mitting other measures was insisted on,  
 “ not to combat a mere loose opinion, but  
 “ a settled principle of his Majesty's mind  
 “ during his reign, the house would see  
 “ the mischiefs that must result. He was  
 “ ready to allow that, abstractedly, ministers  
 “ were not to fetter themselves in the right  
 “ to advise how the prerogative, to give or  
 “ withhold consent to acts of the legislature,  
 “ should be exercised. But the case in  
 “ agitation was a case of bringing forward  
 “ a great legislative question against the  
 “ crown, with the authority and influence  
 “ of ministers of the crown. It was ridi-  
 “ culous to say the king had the prerogative  
 “ of changing his ministers, unless he could  
 “ change them upon certain topics and  
 “ principles. His majesty's mind was made  
 “ up not to concede further upon this ques-  
 “ tion, and further instances could produce  
 “ nothing but agitation and irritation. If  
 “ the minute had been suffered to pass  
 “ without a pledge, an attempt might be  
 “ afterwards made to bring forward the  
 “ measure again, on the ground, that it was  
 “ not contrary to the sanction of the profes-  
 “ sion, and acquiesced in. His majesty  
 “ therefore required a pledge in writing,  
 “ that he should not be disturbed with ap-  
 “ plications which could only produce dis-  
 “ tress and irritation; and that pledge at  
 “ the present moment, went only to extend  
 “ for a little time, the forbearance which  
 “ the late ministers were disposed to shew  
 “ in conceding the measure lately proposed  
 “ by them. When they could not go far-  
 “ ther in that concession, they were bound  
 “ to no eternity of service, they might re-  
 “ sign.”

Mr. Perceval defended himself and his  
 colleagues against the charge of having come



into office under a pledge, and also against that of having advised the king to demand a pledge from the late ministers; but of these we must speak after we have heard my LORD HOWICK, who, as the reporter informs us, rose amidst a loud cry of *question! question!* which, Gentlemen, means, "Let us divide: we want to hear no more." Nothing dismayed, however, and concluding apparently, that those who intended to vote for him and his colleagues, were impatient so to do, the noble Lord, after some prefatory matter, said, "that it was now confessed, that a pledge had been demanded of the late ministers; but who advised the proposing of the pledge was not acknowledged. But there was no act of the crown for which *there must not be a responsible adviser*. Who, then, were responsible for the advising the pledge? Those who gave it effect; the new ministers, the men who contrived to poison the royal mind. Yes, it was now well known, and *and these were times to speak plain*. It was Lord Eldon who had an audience of his majesty, at which, without exactly knowing what had passed, it was *easy to see* that then it was that the subject of the pledge was started. Lord Hawkesbury had also an audience of his majesty at that conjuncture, and that noble lord, in conjunction with Lord Eldon, were employed by his majesty to consult with the Duke of Portland, *in framing a new administration*. These noble lords are, then, *the responsible persons*; for they have given effect to *the demand of the pledge*."—This, Gentlemen, is the reasoning of my Lord Howick, at least so the newspaper reporters of debates tell us. But, was there ever any thing farther fetched, or less worth the carriage? What a whimsical notion, that some one, other than the king, must be responsible for having caused the late ministers to be displaced? It was the new ministers who gave effect to the pledge, because, forsooth, they took the places of Lord Howick and his colleagues! But, suppose it had happened, that the demand of the pledge had been advised, supposing it to have been *advised* by any body, which does not appear to be the fact; suppose it had been advised by some one, who had not accepted of a place in the new ministry, what then would Lord Howick have done for a charge of *giving effect* to the demand of the pledge? The true doctrine of responsibility is this, that for all measures, adopted by the king, his ministers, for the time being, are liable to censure and punishment at the hands of the two houses of parliament; but, did any man

ever before dream of a parliamentary censure or impeachment of ministers for having accepted of their places as such? If this doctrine were acted upon, how is it possible that the king should ever change his servants, without the previous consent of parliament? For what man would place himself in a situation, which would instantly expose him to punishment? In the choosing of his servants the act must necessarily be the king's own, without any responsibility any where; nor can there arise any harm from this, if the parliament be properly constituted; for, if the House of Commons are convinced, that the king has put foolish or wicked men into offices of great trust, they have the power, and it is their bounden duty, to refuse to suffer any taxes to be raised to be exposed to the management of such men. This is an effectual check upon the king; it is quite as much power as the House of Commons ought to possess; it is agreeable to reason and to the laws and usages of our country, and, at various times, has been exercised with complete effect, and to great national advantage. It is, indeed, that cause to which our forefathers owed those liberties, which, alas! they bequeathed to us. And is it not strange, Gentlemen, that my Lord Howick never thought of it? or, at least, that he appeared not to think of it? His Lordship averred, in the close of his speech, that he had *no confidence* in the present ministers. I believe him with all my heart, and so, I dare say, you will; but, why not, then, proceed in the constitutional way? Why not move to withhold all public money from their clutches? His Lordship, whose office *now* is that of "an individual member of parliament," has no confidence in "his Majesty's confidential servants," but yet he seems to think nothing at all of letting sixty or seventy millions of his constituents' money pass annually through their hands. Yes, my lord, "these are times to speak plain," and I would speak, if I dared, upon many subjects, and particularly upon the deeds of the *last six weeks* of your administration; but, this I dare speak, that I remember those deeds, and, remembering them, I rejoice that you are no longer surrounded by a majority in parliament; I rejoice, that that same majority which supported your motion for reprimanding Mr. Paull, have now, with singular justice, expressed their approbation of your dismissal from office.

MR. CANNING, now Secretary of State for foreign affairs, concluded his speech, and the debate in a strain of moving eloquence. He said, "that, whatever might

" be t  
" he  
" ther  
" Com  
" and  
" how  
" not  
" then  
" mos  
" but  
" prom  
" the  
" alrea  
" ever  
" the  
" his  
" thei  
" mig  
" it t  
—It  
either  
for my  
thing  
cing.  
toward  
of bei  
Comm  
such  
give t  
their  
til of  
with a  
ment.  
an act  
fusion  
to the  
moder  
faithfu  
any of  
fact) t  
the ki  
sent t  
in a  
ny ye  
has h  
I thi  
that  
witho  
minis  
to the  
pretty  
is a b  
and, l  
speak  
" pro  
Cann  
quali  
ward  
was l  
your  
while



“be the decision of the House that night, “he thanked God” (God, observe!)— “there was an appeal from the bar of the “*Commons to the nation*. The discussion “and correspondence that had taken place “however, had shewn his Majesty to be “not only as competent as any amongst “themselves to the discussion of the “most important concerns of his empire, “but also to be in a state of health that “promised many years’ addition to nearly “the half century that he had auspiciously “already reigned over this empire. What- “ever might be the issue of the division or “the succession of divisions in that House, “his Majesty’s ministers would stand by “their sovereign, though circumstances “might occur, in which they would find “it their duty to appeal to the country.”

—It is not for me, gentlemen, to dictate either to your taste or your feelings; but, for my own part, I think I never read any thing more sublime, affecting, or convincing. First, we perceive profound gratitude towards the Creator for the great blessing of being able to appeal from the House of Commons to the people, convoked, as upon such occasions we knew them to be, to give their free and unbiassed suffrages to their representatives in “the great council of the nation,” as the *Morning Post*, with appropriate reverence, calls the parliament. Next, and as naturally following an act of religious devotion, comes an effusion of loyalty and personal attachment to the king, or “the sovereign,” as the modern phrase is, and an assurance to his faithful commons, that he is as competent as any of them (and I dare be sworn to the fact) to the management of the concerns of the kingdom (no, the “empire”) at this present time; and not only that, but that he is in a state of health that promises us many years prolongation of a reign, which has hitherto been so auspicious. Here I think with great submission however, that Mr. Canning might have closed, without a significant avowal, that the new ministers might find it necessary to appeal to the country, that idea having been before pretty fully expressed. But, Mr. Canning is a better judge of these matters than I am; and, besides, I have always said, as well of speaking as of writing, “give me that which produces the most effect;” and, that Mr. Canning’s speech was rich in this capital quality, the division, in a few minutes afterwards, abundantly proved. So confident was Lord Howick of a majority in his favour, that he actually talked, we are told, while the division was going on, of following

up the motion, then deciding upon, with other motions of a similar tendency; and particularly by one respecting “the threat,” as it is called, thrown out by Mr. Canning in the effusion of heart-melting and mind-convincing eloquence, which we have just been admiring! A threat! What does Mr. Perry mean by a threat? Is it to threaten the House of Commons to give them an assurance of the king’s competence and good health? Or, is it to threaten them to say, that it is possible that their constituents may have an opportunity afforded them of re-choosing their representatives, or, of choosing new ones? We know, that the House of Commons consists of the people’s representatives; we know, that there are the same persons to vote for members that voted last summer; we know, that the law forbids, under heavy penalties, bribery, corruption, treating, or undue influence of any sort, at elections; we know, that every member takes a solemn oath as to his qualification in point of property, and, of course, that none of the members so recently chosen can be deficient upon that head. So that it is really hard to conceive how these people could have discovered a threat in the speech of Mr. Canning; for, as the seats of the members, we must take for granted, cost them nothing, and as their views, in offering themselves as candidates, are, as we plainly see from their several election addresses, purely to be able to serve us, to watch over our welfare, to protect and cherish our rights, and particularly to guard our money; as their views are so perfectly free from any tinge of self-interest, how could the telling of them that they might probably be dissolved, possibly be regarded as a threat, seeing that the utmost extent of the inconvenience of a dissolution, would be, to some of the members, a day or two of visit to their constituents, and, perhaps, to the far greater part of them, even this slight trouble might be spared, so perfectly satisfied are their constituents with their conduct? Yet, Gentlemen, do the Whigs, and particularly Mr. Perry, incessantly rail against this speech of Mr. Canning; and, since the House of Commons has discovered a majority against them, they rail against that too; and, would you believe it, Gentlemen, that this very Mr. Perry, who, observe, calls us Jacobins and Levelers, published, in his paper of the 13th instant, an article which he denominates “*The Puppet Show*,” but in which he evidently enough aims at the depicting of political scenes, and which I shall here insert for the purpose of drawing down upon him and his writings your just censure and indigna-



tion: "The Westminster Company of independent performers being lately dissolved, and it being thought highly desirable to encourage a taste for pantomime, spectacle, melo-dramas, legerdemain, and Bartholomew-Fair entertainments, a new puppet-show has been recently established upon a larger and more expensive scale than any ever before exhibited. No pains have been spared to procure the very best automata extant, remarkable for a certain degree of voluntary motion, combined with the utmost docility, and obedient to the slightest touch of the springs which set them in motion.—A few friends have been admitted to a rehearsal, which, however, from the unfinished state of the machinery was entitled to every indulgence. The theatre is in the form of a chapel, dimly illuminated by a number of transparencies, the principal of which represent the burning of heretics, assassination, massacres, a conversation between the pope and the devil, and other subjects calculated to bring to the recollection of the spectator, those dark ages when mummery and puppet-shows were in high repute. The stage, as usual on such occasions, is furnished with a semi-curtain to conceal those managers, performers, or scene-shifters, who either wish to be invisible, or are ashamed to be seen. After waiting a considerable time, some person having called out "*manage*," a voice from behind the curtain replied, "wants me? Mun I be the manager—Weel, come awa lads, be steady, and mind what I say—Recollect what you are—You are automata, mere puppets, you are greatly to resemble the idols of old in the hands of crafty priests. You are to have eyes, but to see not; ears, but to hear not; speak you may, but like wise fools, *not a word more than is set down for you*." The voice was here interrupted by some person who seemed to think these expressions were not intended for the ear of the audience, and who begged leave to remark that a regular performance was not as yet to be expected, the immediate object in view, being to inspect the materials and workmanship, and to see if the different figures were proof against *nose-wringing, ear-pulling, kicks, cuffs, cudgelling*, and the usual indignities to which performers of this class have been immemorially subject, and which constitute the principal part of the entertainment.—In this respect, it must be confessed, the figures have been manu-

factured in a style of high perfection, with faces insensible to shame, and apparently unconscious of their inferiority, degradation, and disgrace. Hisses, groans, and cries of "*off, off*," with the usual accompaniments, are to be of no avail. Large sums paid down, extravagant promises, and *threats of a premature death*, and subsequent damnation, are conjointly employed to hire and keep together a large establishment of chorus singers, to drown the loud notes of disapprobation. Nay, it is resolved, that should the theatre even tumble about their ears, John Bull shall still have his favourite fun, and with all the effrontery of itinerants they will continue to play their pranks in every county, city, and borough in the United Kingdom. Much is expected from the exhibition of a few harlequins, who in the rotatory motion of their heads, and vacillation of their bodies, possess so much rapidity that it is impossible to say on which side of the stage you perceive them.—A more particular description of this new establishment, the scenery, secret machinery, principal puppets, and general claim to public notice, must necessarily be deferred, not for want of rational anticipation, but until opinion be established by facts."—Who Mr. Perry may mean to designate by "*the devil*," squabbling with the pope, I must leave you to guess, and, indeed, all I shall say with respect to this article, is, that the author, or publisher of it, expressed his alarm, a few days before, lest a dissolution of parliament should produce "*licentiousness of debate*, and a *jubilee suspension of authority*," among us, the agitators of Middlesex and Westminster."

To connect with high and authentic matter, like the foregoing, any notions, proceeding merely from myself, would, I feel, be indecorous in the extreme; and, therefore, I must beg leave once more to defer, until another opportunity, the observations, which I think it may be useful to offer you, upon the subject of what I regard as the sole remedy for our political evils in general, and especially for the heart-burnings which incessantly arise about the distribution of power and emolument in the state. In the mean while, anxiously hoping, that you will seriously reflect upon all these matters,

I remain,

Gentlemen,

Your faithful friend,

And obedient servant,

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 15th April, 1807.

P. S. received, Westminster: W. fyldes, Esq. Porches, Esq. Sir, Esq. A. Esq. G. ward Mr. Pau in the prior wise must, while ber of i nominee mittce t ed. A tee will shall, I It will be long time taken lea we shall I think John Do late mini was in a appearing removed

UPON T

To the E

GE

will be your elec tular cir it is ver understa rupture ters, as self; be late mini therefore what, as with all any, I fe ture of of whom mirer, horns of was indi it was n teeth of repugna pensil ly which n



P. S. Since writing the above I have perceived, that the committee for trying the Westminster Petition is appointed, as follows: Wm Tuffnell, Esq. Sir C. W. Bamfylde, Esq. Sir Jacob Astley, Bart. Lord Porchester. T. Foley, Esq. Sir H. D. Hamilton, Bart. N. Sneyd, Esq. G. Campbell, Esq. Sir L. Palke, Bart. W. Lushington, Esq. A. Hamilton, Esq. W. Honeywood, Esq. G. Colclough, Esq. Nominees—Edward Morris, Esq. Sir John Doyle, Bart.—Mr. Paull, from his confidence, doubtless, in the integrity, impartiality, and superior wisdom of the House, of which he must, of course, have seen so much, while he had the honour to be a member of it, did not, it seems, choose any nominee for himself, but left the committee to choose whomsoever they pleased. As the proceedings of this committee will be very interesting to us, we shall, I hope, lose sight of no part thereof. It will be a subject for us to talk upon for a long time to come; and, now that we have taken leave of our old friends, the Whigs, we shall have leisure for such talk.—Now I think of it, I saw no speech from Sir John Doyle on the motions in favour of the late ministers. I was afraid that gentleman was in a bad state of health; but, his name appearing as Mr. Sheridan's nominee has removed my apprehensions.

UPON THE CHANGE OF MINISTERS AND  
AFFAIRS OF IRELAND.

*To the Electors of Great Britain and Ireland.*

GENTLEMEN.—In all probability you will be soon called upon again to exercise your elective franchise, and under the particular circumstances of such a call at present, it is very proper that you should distinctly understand the measure which led to the rupture between the king and his late ministers, as well as the nature of the rupture itself; because, upon both his Majesty and his late ministers are completely at issue.—I therefore take the liberty of stating to you, what, as a plain man, totally unconnected with all parties, and wanting nothing from any, I feel upon this subject.—Upon the nature of the rupture, I think Lord Melville, of whom I am by no means a political admirer, has reduced the late ministers to the horns of this dilemma; either the measure was *indispensably necessary*, or it was not. If it was not, why urge it as ministers in the teeth of the well known and acknowledged repugnance of the king; and if it was *indispensably necessary*, why give it up? To which may be also added, why, when they

had given it up, were they so anxious to be covered with folly as well as with disgrace, by delivering to the king that notable Cabinet Minute? Was it for the sake of informing the king, that they would in future from time to time act according to their oaths?—Such a formal declaration must either be considered as a deliberate threat to press the same subject again which, notwithstanding its *indispensable necessity* they agreed to abandon; or, as too puerile and contemptible for men entrusted with the administration of a great country to make; it is so much like a woman making up a quarrel with an offended or offending husband:—“Now, my dear, remember, though I give up to you this time, I am determined to tell all our friends that I was in the right, and to *twit* you with this affair in future from time to time, whenever I please.” And, in either case, I think the king was perfectly justifiable in determining, that the persons who had sent him that Minute should be no longer his ministers; and it could be with no other view that his Majesty was advised, and I own I think ill-advised to tender them a written pledge which it was impossible for them to sign; for, in my humble judgment, after attending the discussion on both sides, with as much calmness and impartiality as if I had been a jurymen, I do think that the refusal of the late ministers to sign that pledge, is all the shadow of a case they have with the public, and upon this point alone did my Lord Chancellor venture to rest their defence; for as to their having deceived the king, Lord Grenville declared, that he was authorised by his Majesty to say, that he acquitted them completely of any such intention; and Lord Grenville also declared, that he was satisfied his Majesty had not understood the extent of the measure which they had proposed to him, although they had understood him to give his *reluctant* assent to it in the shape in which it was brought forward.—Then, as to the measure itself. This is the part of the subject of by far the greatest importance, and most worthy of your anxious and particular attention.—I will not enter at present into the question of the claims of the Catholics to power or preferment, nor will I discuss now, how far the particular measure proposed could tend to endanger the Protestant ascendancy in this realm; because, neither of those questions appear to me necessary for the opinion you ought to form upon this occasion. But, I will say this, and, I believe, nine-tenths of the electors of Great Britain and Ireland will go along with me in saying it, that if this measure does tend to



endanger the Protestant ascendancy (and in that light it is well known the king considers it) to which Protestant ascendancy from the first dawn of the reformation, through all the most important struggles for the rights and liberties of the people, I maintain we have been chiefly indebted for the dearest and most valuable of those rights and liberties, I for one would go to death to-morrow rather than yield it.—But, gentlemen, I think at present we may safely lay out of our consideration every other question but simply this: was the measure proposed a measure worthy of great statesmen for the benefit or government of that country for which it was expressly introduced, either as a means of allaying the discontents of Ireland, or of attaching the numerous population of that country to the fate and interests of the empire at large? I think the authors of this measure will admit that nothing can be more fair than this view of the question, stripping it as I do of all the other considerations with which it might be entangled.—Gentlemen, I maintain the negative of this proposition, and, in order to do so, it is necessary to adopt the rule of every good physician; namely, to have a clear understanding of the nature of the disease, and also of the remedy.—It is said, and I believe with great truth, that the situation of Ireland is most critical and alarming, and I own it seems marvellous to me that this discovery should have been made so late, or at least avowed so late.—That there must be some radical defect is obvious to the most careless observer. It was but the other day that we beheld the horrible picture of a large portion of the population of that unhappy country flogged, picketed, half-hanged, and otherwise tortured into obedience to the laws, and these and other outrageous enormities gravely defended in the parliament of that country as *indispensably necessary*, upon grounds of policy. I remember well how strongly, and how eloquently these enormities were reprobated at the time; but, I have observed no one act done or even proposed by those who were so loud then, to make atonement even to the feelings of this deeply-injured and insulted people, much less to make reparation for all the burnings and devastations of a licentious soldiery, “more formidable,” as the immortal Abercromby declared them “to their friends than to the enemy.”—It is well known, and it cannot be denied, that Ireland has been long, too long, most shamefully neglected. It is, perhaps, the greatest reflection upon the two last reigns, which in all other respects seem to have carried the happiness of the country at home, and its

prosperity abroad as high as possible, that the state of Ireland was totally neglected; and from the commencement of the reign of his present Majesty, nothing could have been more erroneous than the advice of his ministers with respect to that country.—The leading feature of this advice has been to make concessions from time to time to the Catholics, and at a time, too, when persons of property and the best informed of that persuasion, were coming over very fast to the established church; and what reason can there be why so large a proportion of the population of Ireland should continue Catholics, when almost the whole of the population of Great Britain are Protestants, but that the treatment of one country has been totally different to that of the other.—It is well known, and it is better to avow it at once than give dark and mysterious hints about it, that the great mass of the population of Ireland, are in a state of discontent and irritation, that requires a large army and perpetual observation to preserve the peace and government of the country. What must be the condition of the population of such a country?—If the laborious classes were in possession of any thing like the real value of their labour; if they had any thing like the means of common justice, is it possible to conceive that they would be perpetually in a state of meditating resistance to the government, at the imminent hazard of their lives, and the ruin of their families? But the fact is well known, that their condition is deplorable; and, I must say, that I should have thought it a more statesman-like measure, to have bestowed a little of that humanity of which we have been lately, and suddenly so liberal towards the negroes, upon our fellow subjects in Ireland, whose condition is much worse than that of the Negroes in the West Indies, and I think such a measure would have been more consonant to the strictest rules of morality; for I have always been suspicious of that universal philanthropy, which begins with the whole human race, and passes over all the intermediate gradations.

“God loves from whole to parts: but human soul

Must rise from individual to the whole.  
Self love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,  
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;  
The centre moved, a circle strait succeeds,  
Another still and still another spreads;  
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,  
His country next, and next all human race.”

“If a man loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath never seen.” If then the state of Ireland is such as I have described it, if it is

a note  
tion of  
ground  
ness a  
dy tha  
give th  
an in  
Englan  
for w  
and fo  
to resi  
though  
tance  
minist  
again,  
ville h  
propos  
out off  
saving  
they fo  
that th  
all, it  
rals in  
genera  
hold th  
master  
cure b  
tice, t  
such C  
ter inte  
was a r  
of a di  
even w  
this.—  
tempti  
rious c  
that ev  
govern  
ly lost  
Lord C  
this pal  
to our  
Ireland  
ple, an  
of uni  
jects.”  
us how  
gle pot  
this dis  
bring s  
ked, fo  
land?  
that, t  
your s  
also yo  
from th  
rebellio  
was cor



a notorious truth, that what with one exaction or another, the labouring classes are ground down to the last stage of wretchedness and despair; what is this grand remedy that is proposed to allay discontent, and give the people of Ireland all at once such an interest in the power and prosperity of England? What is this wonderful *panacea* for which one ministry actually resigned, and for which another ministry not wishing to resign put to hazard being turned out; though as a criterion of the real importance in which both held the nostrum, the ministry that resigned soon accepted of office again, upon a positive pledge, as Lord Melville has now declared, never to renew the proposal, and the ministry that were turned out offered to give it up without even the saving credit of a resignation, the moment they found, as Lord Grenville has declared, that the king disapproved of it.—Why, after all, it is nothing more than that a few generals in the army who are Catholics, may be generals upon the staff, *if the king pleases*, or hold the offices of commanders in chief, or master general of the ordnance, and to secure by law, what is in fact secured by practice, the free exercise of their religion to such Catholics as should think proper to enter into the army and navy.—Now, if there was a remedy not only inadequate to the cure of a disease, but having nothing in common even with the symptoms of a disease, it is this.—That a measure so pitiful, so contemptible, should be thought worthy of serious consideration, might surprise any man that ever turned his mind to the science of government, if his surprise were not instantly lost in the stupendous folly of one of my Lord Grenville's magnificent reveries, that this paltry measure would enable us "to call to our aid the discontented population of Ireland, and conciliate four millions of people, and knit together in one common bond of union the whole of his Majesty's subjects." Pray, my good lord, can you shew us how your grand remedy would add a single potatoe to the miserable subsistence of this discontented population, how it would bring shelter, friends or raiment to the naked, forsaken, houseless, inhabitants of Ireland? When your lordship can shew us that, then, and not till then, will we think your scheme worthy of our attention, and also your quarrel with the king.—We know from the mouths of the leaders of the late rebellion, that when Catholic emancipation was contended for, something very different

to the admissibility of the Catholics to a few of the higher offices of the state, civil and military, which is the whole of the *large question* as it is called, was intended; they wanted emancipation from real, and not ideal grievances; emancipation from the grinding paw of avarice, injustice, and oppression; emancipation from treatment more suitable to brutes than men; emancipation from being driven from one end of Ireland to the other, to Hell or Connaught.—The few, the very few, who might be gratified by the proposed concession, are not persons from whom the government have any thing to dread, either from open resistance, or what has been called *traitorous inactivity*.—It is to the feelings, the interest, and happiness of the population of Ireland, that any wise statesman would look for the peace and prosperity of that country, and so to the greater strength and better security of the empire, and not "to the taking off for the increase of the public force, from" what is called "a superabundant population, by drawing as it were even from the very sources of discontent, the means of our strength," and this by the kidnapping scheme of holding out to this discontented population *something* which they know to be *nothing*. For the last thirty or forty years the only policy that has been adopted towards conciliating this discontented population, has been concession after concession to the Catholics, and what has it produced? Why, literally what it was worth, just nothing: so little did it benefit or conciliate, (and the one is the consequence of the other) that in the end we saw this discontented population bursting out into open rebellion, and the necessity of a large army at an enormous expense to secure this valuable and vulnerable portion of the empire.—It is evident that mere concessions from time to time to the Catholics, have produced no good, and I have shewn that there is no reason why any good should be expected from them.—What therefore, are we to think of the abilities of statesmen who consider this as their grand measure, as *indispensably necessary*. Their readiness to give it up, Lord Grenville's declaration, "that he did not wish to conceal his opinion that the Catholics of Ireland in persisting to bring the question again into discussion at the present moment, were injuring their own cause, and injuring the general interests of the empire," must induce us to think that they considered it merely as a *sop*, vainly hoping thereby to



lull the discontents of Ireland, and to put off the evil day when the affairs of that country must be seriously examined, and great sacrifices made before any good can be done or reasonably expected. And independently of other considerations, who could imagine a measure to be *indispensibly* necessary, which they had in vain endeavoured to suppress, or who would hazard even their own stations for the sake of men who persisted in bringing forward a question relating purely to themselves, and by which they were not only "injuring their own cause, but the general interests of the empire?"—The truth is, the situation of Ireland requires other measures. What those measures should be is not a subject for a hasty letter of this sort; however, I will not fear to hazard an opinion. Having shewn that Ireland has been shamefully neglected and abused, I would adopt the same mode of treatment towards Ireland, that his Majesty with his taste and knowledge of farming, would adopt towards a large estate that had been treated in a similar manner. He would give confidence to a dispirited and dissatisfied tenantry, he would repair their habitations, he would sink capital in great and lasting improvements, he would let his lands at fair and easy rents, he would give every encouragement to their industry, his ears would be always open to the complaints and wants of all that lived upon his lands, he would take care that justice was done to all, he would select a faithful, active, honest, intelligent steward to watch over their interests and his own, and always consider them as inseparable. Oh! but it may be said, how many other considerations are there in the government of a country to the management of an estate; I admit there are; but the principle of action is the same in both.—The first thing a great statesman would advise, would be a deep and thorough investigation into all the causes of discontent. This of itself is no easy task; but the very setting about it in earnest would give hope and inspire confidence. In all cases of difficulty or danger, it was a maxim with the Romans to entrust their affairs to an experienced and successful general, and I would, therefore, advise his Majesty upon this great and difficult occasion to look round him and see, whether he has no subject pre-eminently qualified for this arduous service. I think he has a man qualified by abilities, and integrity, that may be well said to have been tried in the fire, by great and long experience, by undoubted and acknowledged success in having saved one part of his Majesty's dominions in times of the utmost difficulty and danger. But this man is con-

nected with no party, his great mind would never stoop to the intrigues of faction: indeed, both parties united to ruin and destroy him; but his character has towered above all the attacks of their envy, hatred, and malice, and the high opinion entertained of him by his sovereign for his long and faithful services, has been completely justified. It is hardly necessary to say, the man I mean is Mr. Hastings. It is now admitted on all hands that he was the saviour of India; and there is but one opinion of his being the worst used man in the kingdom. When Mr. Pitt at last made up his mind for reasons now well known, to vote for the impeachment, he declared that "if Mr. Hastings was acquitted, there were no honours, no rewards, to which he was not entitled."—Of him I have heard my Lord Thurlow, who took such pains with every part of his case, and the late Marquis of Lansdowne, who engraved upon his bust *Ingrata Patria*, say, that in their opinions, neither Mr. Pitt nor Mr. Fox could be compared with Mr. Hastings as a statesman; and these two noble lords were competent to judge, and were well acquainted, publicly and privately, with the three persons of whom they spoke.—If his Majesty owes to Mr. Hastings the salvation of India, why may his Majesty not owe to Mr. Hastings the salvation of Ireland. Why should such transcendent abilities, so much virtue, and so much courage be lost to the country in this time of peril?—If Mr. Hastings were to go to Ireland, I will venture to say, he would adopt such measures, either by perambulating the country himself, and inquiring into the real causes of discontent, or by appointing fit and proper persons to do so, that he would soon win the hearts and confidence of the inhabitants, and know what course of policy to recommend as to the government of that country. This he would do *without favour or affection*.—One of the great grievances in Ireland, is the system which prevails there almost universally of letting lands, not directly from the landlord to the tenant, as is the course in England and in Scotland; but to a middle man who immediately sets about reletting, without any other consideration than that of how much more he can squeeze out of the miserable tenants who cultivate the soil; and without any regard to their prosperity he takes *all* the land produces, leaving the unhappy broken hearted tenant a bare subsistence; and the consequence is perpetual change, distraining for rent, no mercy, no indulgence, misery and discontent. This after all is the curse of Ireland.—To remedy this evil requires the



head and heart of a great statesman, but it is and ought to be done. The tenantry of Ireland ought to be conciliated and made happy, in spite of their absent, negligent, or avaricious landlords. All the public burthens are by this system made to fall with intolerable grievance upon this laborious class, whereas there ought to be no pressure of public burdens felt by that laborious class, in which resides the physical power of the country, and which it is so great and just an object to conciliate and attach.—Taxes or public burdens have been likened when fairly levied, and properly employed, to the moisture which the sun draws from the earth, and which falls again in refreshing showers; but when partially levied, and improperly applied, to storms and hurricanes which produce devastation and ruin.—Let this principle be attended to, let the affairs of Ireland be examined and conducted with ability and integrity, in short, let Ireland be attended for a few years by a physician of ability, experience, and humanity, and the troops of surgeons that are kept there at an enormous expense ready to perform operations, may be soon as safely *dispensed* with, as my Lord Grenville's *indispensable* Catholic nostrum may be now.—I am, what every intelligent Englishman will endeavour to make himself,—A TRUE ENGLISH IRISHMAN.

## CATHOLIC QUESTION.

SIR,—The Catholic question has, on various occasions, been the subject of much keen discussion, and has never failed to excite very general interest. There are, indeed, comparatively few who do not think, that those restriction laws, which exclude dissenters of this persuasion from political stations, are both impolitic and unjust. In support of this opinion, very many specious arguments have been advanced; but, as it has ever appeared to me, they have all been more or less wide of the truth. It is very freely admitted that the class excluded are *sufferers*; but it is apprehended, that great as their sufferings may be, they do not afford an atonement by any means commensurate, with the vast extent of their moral delinquencies. This assertion will be fully justified, if we advert for a moment to the peculiar tenets of their faith, and the practical consequences which must necessarily result from them. The obnoxious nature of that oath, which is administered to each bishop at his consecration is so very apparent, that to give any comment upon it, were only to insult the good sense of your readers. He swears in the most solemn manner possible,

“ that he will from that hour forward be faithful and obedient to Saint Peter, and to the holy church of Rome, and to his Lord the Pope, and his successors canonically entering: that the papacy of Rome, the rules of the holy fathers, and the regalities of Saint Peter, he will keep, maintain, and defend against all men: that the rights, privileges, and authorities of the Roman church, and of the Pope, and of his successors, he will cause to be conserved, defended, augmented and promoted: and that heretics, schismatics, and rebels to the holy father, and his successors, he will resist, and to his power persecute.”—The bare recital of such an oath, is almost as shocking to humanity, as the religion which enjoins it, is repugnant to the dictates of reason, and of common sense. It is evidently pregnant with the utmost possible illiberality, absurdity, and cruelty. But it is insinuated, that no danger is now to be dreaded from the Catholics, as the principles of toleration are generally understood among them, and as they are very willing to renounce all connections with a foreign head. Our fears respecting them are termed romantic, wild, and visionary. Accordingly, an host of ecclesiastics are prepared to abjure the pope, to reprobate every clause of the oath referred to, and to maintain that the principle which denies “ that faith ought to be kept with heretics,” is palpably absurd, as well as glaringly impious. This is all very well; but still it will admit of a doubt, whether we have yet got any satisfactory evidence of their conversion. Their words and their oaths would seem to be equally deserving of credit; for we have already had fatal experience, of the real value of both. In fact, a free pardon may be obtained for any crime, how great soever may be its magnitude, by which an augmentation of the power, or the wealth, of the See of Rome is acquired. That opinion too, which, of all others, is most dissonant to morality, nameily, “ that it is commendable to do evil that good may come,” is not only a favourite dogma; but it is incorporated with every ceremony, of holy church. It were vain to deny, that there are in her communion many valuable characters, who would scorn to be guilty of that vile duplicity, which marks all her proceedings, and which is so frequently practised by her clergy. But it is likewise true, that the religion itself, is not only favourable to tyranny and superstition; but that both are strongly inculcated by it. In good truth, those who adhere to it, at least the majority of them, and still more especially the clergy, wish nothing so much, as the subversion of



the constitution of this country, whether in church or state. Their emancipation is far from being the only, or even the chief object, of their ardent desires. On the contrary, such an ascendancy in the state, as may ultimately pave the way for the legal establishment of their faith, is that which they have invariably in view. It is possible that they may not be too sanguine in their expectations. Their innocence, integrity, and uprightness, as well as the harmlessness of their principles, are now become fashionable topics of conversation. But it is an old adage, and it is a very true one, that "*it is not all gold that glitters.*" Fair professions are made very easily: they cost little, and the greatest knaves ordinarily abound with most of them. We are invidiously asked whether it is not highly proper, that all religions should be tolerated, and whether the members of opposite communions, ought not to be eligible to places of trust and emolument under government? Both these questions are susceptible of a very easy and obvious solution. Every religion ought to be tolerated, how absurd or unreasonable soever its tenets may be, if they are not dissonant to the principles of humanity and social order. The doctrine of the universal right of conscience, embraces equally the disciple of Moses, of Confucius, or of Christ. Every human creature ought assuredly to be allowed, (but on no account required) to worship his Maker, under the dome of a cathedral, or within the unconsecrated walls of a dwelling house, without ever coming under the cognizance of any penal statute. But if he shall be at once foolish and depraved enough, to attempt the extirpation of his neighbour's religion, or, if he believes that it is incumbent on him to do so, then ought his actions immediately to be suspected, and each of his motions cautiously watched. No one can deny that this is reasonable, and just, and politic. So much then for the first question. In answer to the second, it may not be improper to make a few desultory remarks, on restrictive laws in general, and more particularly, on those which presently affect the Catholics. And it is nothing more than justice to say, that considered *abstractly*, or without any relation to the end proposed to be answered by them, they are peculiarly oppressive, if not wholly unjust. They serve to place the tomb-stone on the venerable head of genius: nor do they ever fail to check activity, and stop the march of improvement. We can scarcely suppose, that genuine patriotism will ever thrive in a soil, where the noxious weeds of distrust and suspicion, are nurtured with vigilance, and

care, and toil. Honour and wealth are found to be the principal motives, which prompt human exertion, in the present imperfect state of society. Unless, therefore, means are employed to allure self love into the service of the public, we shall in vain expect to find individuals, growing into permanent habits of virtue, or increasing in love to their country. Let us apply these observations to the subject presently under discussion. The Catholics, every one knows, form a very considerable part of the population of Great Britain and Ireland. But for their religious sentiments, many of them would rank high in the army, and not a few would be eligible to political stations. Many of them are no less distinguished for the brilliancy of their talents, than for the excellency of their hearts. Is it reasonable, or proper, or even expedient, therefore, that their genius and worth should lie hid in obscurity, instead of being called forth into notice, in order that the public might enjoy the full advantage of both? This question is confessedly deserving of a serious answer. There are few who would feel inclined to deny, that by far the majority of Catholics, can lay little claim to intellectual or moral worth. Their knowledge is limited to a meagre list of insipid dogmas, which shrink from sober and manly investigation. It is not indeed, easy to suppose, that a mind capable of giving serious credence, to the doctrines of transubstantiation, and the trinity: the infallibility of the pope, and auricular confession, could be any great acquisition to a society of sensible mechanics, and certainly much less so, to a Cabinet Council, or a British House of Commons. One cannot help thinking, therefore, that those enlightened individuals, who are found in the communion of the Romish church, do not really believe the absurdities, which custom and education have taught them to hold sacred. They would rather appear to have a feeling, as if they were walking over a precipice, and anxious to keep the safest side. But apart from the intellectual poverty of the professors of this religion, the majority of them are still more destitute of that integrity, which can alone render one being an object of trust and confidence to another. This is confessedly an awful charge; but it is undeniably true. We all know that nefarious advice, which the holy successor of Saint Peter, tendered to the unfortunate monarch of France. The purport of it was, that he might lawfully deceive his people, by calling heaven and earth to witness the sincerity of his professions with regard to the new constitution, while he purposed in his heart its final overthrow. May



I compromise, inquired the unhappy sovereign? Yes, you may, rejoined the most consummate of all hypocrites. Leo the tenth could say among the wits of his time, "what a fine thing this same fable of Christ has been to us;" and calmly enjoy those splendid emoluments which *then* resulted from the publication of it. Many other instances are on record, which serve equally to evince, that the priesthood of the Catholic church inherit all those qualities, which human nature ought not to possess. As are the *priests*, so are the majority of the people, and, indeed, it were unreasonable to suppose the contrary. I need scarcely inquire, whether it would be prudent to place confidence in such characters? If it be really, and in good faith, a sentiment of their religion, that it is lawful to deceive their fellow creatures by false professions, and at the same time to call upon the Judge of the whole earth to witness their sincerity, what Englishman, what consistent Protestant, nay, what honest infidel, would wish to see the management of the important interests of his country, consigned into their hands. But neither is this the only vice, with which they are chargeable. In their character, a dreadful compound of duplicity and cruelty, will be found to exist. Let the early part of our history be appealed to, in proof of this assertion, as well as that of every Catholic country. It cannot be alledged in their behalf, that their opinions are merely speculative, and that they have no effect upon their practice, as we all know that the contrary of this is true. The public mind has become extremely altered with regard to them, from what it was about a century and an half ago. Anciently, it was usual to view them with the utmost conceivable jealousy, cautiously to mark all their movements, and to guard against their slow and almost imperceptible encroachments, with a vigilance which could alone be equalled by that consummate wisdom, with which it was dictated. Our venerable ancestors were unwilling that these old serpents should sting them twice, and they were careful to warn their posterity, against their malice, and cruelty, and cunning. For a long while subsequent to the revolution in England, they were known by the name of "*the Common Enemy*," and were recognised as such by government. But, it should seem, we have got more enlightened now, and we can laugh very heartily at that silly ignorance, which could dread any serious injury from the devotees of the Romish faith. Let there be no more of this. We are not surely ignorant of the very intimate alliance which subsists, be-

tween the Catholics in this country, and his holiness at Rome. We know likewise, or at least we ought to know, the sanguinary nature and tendency of their principles, as well as the motives which prompt them to petition for a redress of their grievances. If we are not then dead to every sentiment, which ought to agitate the breasts of freemen; if we would not wish to see barbarism and superstition again usurp the sacred empire of truth and reason; if we would not have our posterity again bow to gods of wood and stone; if we would not chuse that absolute monarchy should once more be venerated as the best of governments, and the monarch himself adored as the anointed of the Most High; if we would deprecate all those dreadful evils, let us guard against the treachery of the Catholics, at least until they shall have fully expiated their crimes, and until we shall have obtained better evidence of the sincerity of their professions, than either their words or their oaths can afford. The Test Laws cannot be justified, however, in as far as they operate against the *Protestant Dissenters*, either on the ground of justice, or of expediency. They are a class of patient sufferers, who have long struggled under the frowns of the court, and the anathemas of the orthodox. You are well aware, that they are excluded from political stations, in consequence of that act which enjoins the reception of the holy eucharist, according to the rights and ceremonies of the established church, upon every individual capable of holding any office under government. The act of indemnity, it has been said, is equivalent to the total abrogation of this statute; but than this nothing can be more false. It is freely admitted, that a certain description of Dissenters may, and, as there is reason to think, do, conform to it without compunction; but, it is worthy of remark, that between their religious opinions, and those of the established church, the shade of difference is much too minute to merit serious attention. The followers of the Geneva reformer will feel very little interest in the repeal of the Test Laws, while they do not immediately affect themselves. But there are a numerous and highly respectable class of Protestant Dissenters, who, were it not for their religious opinions, would be eligible to political station; and who have never, almost in a single instance, been found to qualify themselves in terms of the statute referred to. No danger need be apprehended from the dissemination of their principles, whether political or religious, as the former are in perfect unison with those of the British constitution, and as the latter have all a re-



ference to the "world to come." Between them and the Catholics there is no similarity. The peaceable principles of the rational Dissenters are become, in a manner, proverbial. Instead of encouraging wars and persecutions, they have all their lives been loudly protesting against both. Moreover, we can depend upon their words and their oaths. They have got no indulgences for dissimulation, nor have they the remotest connection with a foreign head. If the act of indemnity do indeed render the penal laws existing against them obsolete, as is pretended, why are they not expunged from our statute books? But even supposing this should never be the case, why should any one propose to elevate the Catholics so much above them? This is neither reasonable, nor fair, nor just. —I remain, Sir, with great respect, yours, &c.—SIMPLICIUS.—*Aberdeen, 27th March, 1807.*

## CHANGE OF MINISTRY.

SIR,—Anxious that merit should be the concomitant of talent, my inclination was prone to the honourable mention of the eminent men who formed the stay and bulwark of the late administration; and, I confess, Sir, I struggled hard in my own mind to have acquitted them with éclat, and to have rescued them from the sable cloud with which you had enveloped them, by the publication of your last week's letter; but, I must admit my efforts were vain, and I am compelled to leave them smarting under the lash of your pen, which though severe, seems just. I was at first dazzled with an apparent dignity softened with conciliation, which seemed to breathe through the speeches of Lords Grenville and Howick, but I was called from my delusion, on considering the position which you so forcibly put, viz. that if the measure they proposed relating to the Catholics (*pestis ero vivens*) were just and necessary, why did ministers offer to relinquish it; and, if it were of a contrary tendency, what must have been the motives which led to its adoption. The position and the inference are too strong for me, with all the warmth of my wishes, to controvert; more particularly when informed (as the late and present ministers have taken care we should be) of the nature of a privy counsellor's, and consequently of a minister's, oath; for if it be the unquestionable duty of a minister, to advise his sovereign to the best of his judgment, unswayed by partiality or interest, it must be also his duty to recede from the office of official adviser to the crown, when those measures which in his judgment he has advised as fit and expedient

to be adopted, have the royal sanction refused them: for that advice, to use your language, Mr. Cobbett, "must be worse than useless," which passes by unheeded. If there be an act to be done, a parliamentary measure to be instituted which the safety of the state, or the happiness of the people requires, it is the duty of ministers to advise the executive power to give effect to such a measure; but if the measure be just and expedient it ought to be carried into effect, and the omission or refusal to do so is an injury to the state; to answer for which injury, there must be somewhere a responsibility, and the fundamental maxim and laws of the country designates ministers as the responsible persons. By consequence, therefore, no minister or official adviser can constitutionally continue in office, who has proposed a measure in his conscience advantageous to the state, to which his Majesty, or rather the executive power, refuses an acquiescence. In such predicament did the late ministers stand when the qualified emancipation of the Catholics was proposed, and the royal consent withheld; but they varied from the plain line of conduct which, if I am correct, it was their duty to follow, and offered to capitulate by an abandonment of their plan. To have so capitulated unless convinced of the fallacy of the measure (which they now even positively disavow) was to have been guilty, as it occurs to me, of an indisputably unconstitutional act, and a dereliction of their duty as ministers; and had his Majesty, satisfied with their humiliation, permitted them still to have continued his official advisers, it would have become, I apprehend, the duty of parliament to have humbly addressed his Majesty to have removed them from his counsels; and had not such recommendation had its desired effect, we might have said in the language of a Roman Consul, "*Errare cives, si tum senatum aliquid in republicâ posse arbitrantur.*" It seems admitted on all sides; by the gentlemen who have left, as well as those who have succeeded to the administration of affairs, that the present state of the country cannot be called a "Bed of Roses;" and as it has been the habit of those in power to weary their auditors with turgid and fulsome eulogiums on the prosperity and stability of the country, we may fairly, I presume, interpret this negative bed of roses, to imply a very uneasy, if not a flinty couch. But, Sir, if the country be so critically situated, if our condition be so truly perilous, what consolation is left us, but the hope that we may have the guardianship and assistance of ministers endued with luminous



minds and inflexible integrity, and who possess the *essential qualification* of an intimate acquaintance with the principles of the constitution. But, Sir, where are our hopes to find a resting place? How are they to be realized, when we find that the very *rudiments* of the constitution are unknown by men, under whose protecting power the country is to be placed? Strange and paradoxical as this may appear, it is, I affirm, incontrovertibly true. Lords Grenville, Howick, and Hawkesbury are at this moment at variance on the mere simple question, of what is the duty of an official adviser of the crown; and yet will these gentlemen take their posts as such advisers with all the firmness of conscious worth. Lord Hawkesbury insists, that for a minister to propose a measure in parliament, to which his Majesty may be averse, is to divide the executive power from the monarch, and to throw an odium on the royal person, which is unconstitutional. Lords Grenville and Howick assert, that a minister has two duties to perform; the one as official adviser, the other as member of parliament; and, that in the latter capacity, a minister may constitutionally propose and advocate a legislative measure, without the approbation of the crown; provided it be not one which falls within the precinct of the ministerial office; how far that ministerial office extending, the noble lords omitting to give us any information. Now, Sir, if it be a maxim well founded, "that the life of government is REPUTATION," in what a hopeful condition is it now placed, surrounded with dangers, and deprived of its "bed of roses." What rational expectation has the people, I ask, of being relieved from the fearful exigency of the times, when the fundamental principles of government are professedly not understood by those to whom the safety of the state is entrusted? This dispute among his Majesty's late and present ministers is particularly ill timed; "non hoc ista sibi tempus spectacula poscit!" it chills the warmth of our expectations, and nothing but the "leprosy of eloquence" could have induced them to have agitated the subject: but as it has been agitated, I will trouble you with a few words relating to it. It is an admitted fundamental maxim of the constitution, "that the king can do no wrong;" a maxim most desirable, and which at once establishes the unbounded loyalty and affection of a people towards their monarch: but the same wisdom which established the maxim, necessarily established, also, that responsibility should attach somewhere; and as it could not attach on those who were unconnected with

the acts of the executive power, it became an essential branch of the constitution, that the king should have official advisers, in order that there might be those on whom the responsibility could justly fall. Now, it is a clear and fundamental principle of justice, that no man should be responsible for what he cannot avoid; and of necessity, therefore to make the official advisers of the crown responsible, they must be perfectly free and uncontrolled in their right to advise; and equally free to cease to be such official advisers, when their advice shall be rejected. So long, therefore, as a minister continues in his office, the executive branch must be presumed to have acceded to every recommendation that such minister may have made; for, as it is clear, a minister would be responsible for *omitting* to do, what in his official capacity he found was necessary to be done, it cannot for an instant be supposed, that any minister would continue in office under the penalties of responsibility, when his judgment was either opposed, or in any manner counteracted.—I have deduced the nature, and principles of responsibility thus far, in order that I might satisfy you, Mr. Cobbett, that Lords Hawkesbury, Grenville, and Howick, notwithstanding they differ as to the duty of a minister, are not either of them correct in their ideas of the subject. Lord Hawkesbury says, that for a minister to advocate any measure in the House inimical to the feelings and disposition of his Majesty, (who will probably refuse his concurrence to it) is to throw upon his Majesty an *odium*; which cannot be constitutional: and Lords Grenville and Howick, who under "existing circumstances" denied the truth of that proposition, admitted, however, that it was the duty of a minister not to introduce any measure in parliament which had not his Majesty's previous approbation. Now, both those positions of these political luminaries, are, I contend, Sir, unquestionably fallacious; and the last two noble lords perceived the difficulty of maintaining their proposition, without absorbing the member of parliament in the minister, which, however, upon no principle of sound sense could be supported; and they, therefore, insisted on the individuality of the two characters, though they contended for the accuracy of their proposition. Now, I take it to be quite clear, Mr. Cobbett, that a member of parliament, being minister, holds the two characters perfectly distinct; and that he has a right; and, indeed, it is his *bounden duty*, as a member, to propose in parliament whatever measure he shall think expedient, or that the exigency of the state shall re-



quire; but having so proposed it, if it eventually receive the concurrence of the two Houses of Parliament, the proposer (being at the same time the King's official adviser) would be responsible that the measure should receive the executive sanction; and if his Majesty, in his *undoubted* discretion, should refuse his assent, the consequence of such refusal, being injurious to the state, must of necessity attach on the minister; who in such case, to redeem himself from the consequence, would have no alternative but to resign; as by continuing in office, he could defend himself with no possible exculpation. Now, there is no anomaly I insist in this doctrine; it is as perfectly consistent (apparently to me) with the principles of the constitution, as it is agreeable to the dictates of reason. That a very great, and almost self-evident anomaly prevailed in the mind of Lord Hawkesbury, when he talked of "*throwing an odium*" on the King, cannot I think, admit of doubt; for there can be constitutionally no such thing as *odium attaching on the monarch*; and by making such an assertion, my Lord Hawkesbury, with all due deference to his lordship's wisdom and talents, most satisfactorily established to me, that although he admitted the maxim that the king can do no wrong, he did not really understand it. That he did not do so will clearly appear, when we consider, that to admit that *odium* can be thrown upon his Majesty respecting any parliamentary measure, requires that we should previously admit, that his Majesty may have done that which is wrong; for without a wrong either real or supposed, no man can by *possibility* be the subject of odium; but by the fundamental maxim of the state, the king can do no wrong; the supposition, therefore, that any odium can be reflected on his Majesty, instantaneously vanishes. When the late ministry introduced a measure which they felt necessary to the welfare of the state should be adopted, but to which his Majesty's sanction could not be obtained (and which I for one do most unfeignedly thank his Majesty, for I feel fully persuaded of the truth of that maxim which says, "*ubi papa, ibi Roma! in sæcula sæculorum!*") it was their duty to have resigned: at the same time, Sir, though the omitting to do so was an indiscretion, they at least deserve our thanks for not entering into the pledge which has been the subject of so much discussion; as such pledge, so long as it had been adhered to, would have struck at the very vitals of the state; for, how can responsibility exist without a freedom of will, and how can such freedom and a pledge

be compatible? No argument is necessary to establish that a pledge is inconsistent with the principles of the constitution; but if it be so, how have the present ministry avoided it? Have they not virtually, if not actually, entered into such a pledge? It strikes me as impossible for them to get rid of the charge. If I discharge my servant for refusing to do a particular act which I require of him, and I take another who enters my service with a full knowledge of the cause of my parting with my former one; does he not virtually assent to do the particular act, whatever it may be, for not doing which, I parted with the servant he has succeeded? A tribunal of justice would so decide it. And these gentlemen so jealous lest any *odium* should attach upon their monarch, cannot shield themselves by saying that his Majesty required of Peter what he would *not* require of Paul; because, if Paul and Peter are to fill precisely the same situations, there would be nothing of distributive justice in varying the services required of each. Lord Chatham suggested the expediency of "*infusing a portion of new health into the constitution, to enable it to bear its infirmities*;" but, I should suggest, Sir, as a preliminary measure, the expediency of infusing a portion of new health into the *intellects* of those who have the care of the constitution intrusted to them; for, without that Hygiean valour, I am afraid, Mr. Cobbett, they will not be enabled to say with Augustus, "*we found the city of brick, and have left it of marble.*"  
—M. S.—*Lincoln's Inn, March 31.*

## CATHOLIC BILL.

SIR;—I am a constant reader and admirer of your Register, and as such, I take the liberty of submitting a few remarks on a subject, upon which at present, I am inclined to differ from you.—In your last Saturday's Register, in treating upon the subject of the king's interference in regard to withdrawing the Catholic Bill, it does appear to me, and it is with the greatest deference that I submit my opinion to your consideration, that you have laid a greater stress of disapprobation upon this supposed interference than the nature of the case will warrant.—The distinction, in the case before us, that I am desirous of establishing, is this, that it would be highly improper and unconstitutional for his majesty to shew his disapprobation, or to make use of his influence, to stop the progress of any Bill brought into Parliament by any individual member, *not in the cabinet*, until it comes before him in its regular and constitutional course, for his sanction or refusal; but that, on the other hand, he is



competent, without infringement of the constitution, to express to his ministers his disapprobation of any bill brought into parliament by them, *as members of the cabinet*, without his previous concurrence.—And the distinction appears obviously this, that he communicates to them his disapprobation, of this their immediate act, as his servants and advisers, and not as members of the legislature; and consequently, that they ought previously to obtain his consent to any bill or measure, concerted as his servants, and intended to be brought into parliament by them; and further, that the king as the head of the cabinet, must be considered as a party to every measure which originates in it; and he has, so far, an undoubted right to be *fully* acquainted, with the nature and extent of the measures *so originating*: in short the king appears in a very considerable degree identified with his cabinet.—If this doctrine should seem to you unsound I have no doubt but the ill consequences which might result from its application, will immediately present themselves to your mind, though at the moment none of any considerable weight, occur to me.—It in fact amounts only to this, that the ministers, *as servants of the king*, ought not to *originate* any bill, known to them as hostile or distressing to his feelings and conscience, without his positive concurrence;—it is their business, first to convince his mind, that the measures they propose, are such as he can conscientiously assent to, are necessary for the good of the state, and are founded in wisdom and policy. And for this reason, that it would reduce both the king and his ministers, to a most awkward dilemma, were a measure originating in this quarter, to pass both Houses of Parliament, and *afterwards*, to meet with an obstacle in the ultimate sanction of his majesty, with whom (as identified with his cabinet) it would seem, to a certain extent, to have originated.—It therefore follows, if any particular measure so circumstanced, shall appear to the ministers as indispensable to the welfare of the country, they ought without hesitation, as honorable and independant men rather to resign their situations, and immediately bring it forward as individual Members of Parliament, than abandon any measure which they conceive, to the best of their judgements, calculated to produce an essential benefit to their country.—The distinguishing characteristic of servitude, I take for granted, to be obsequiousness to the will of the master or employer, in a more or less degree, according to the various situations in life. When that ceases, the proper relations between master and man are at an end, and

a course of disorder and insubordination follows; totally destructive of the natural order of things. Now, as the ministers are continually calling themselves, the King's servants, they surely do mean to acknowledge, a degree of obsequiousness to his will to a certain extent, as a characteristic of their servitude. And upon this ground, it would seem only decorous on their part, to consult and study his wishes and inclination, in matters of personal and *conscientious* considerations at least, as far as they can consistent with their duty and honor, and when called upon to go further, the remedy is short and straight before them—let them unfetter themselves from all restraint of duty or obedience, as servants of his majesty by the resignation of their places.—I leave to you, Sir, to decide upon the merits and plausibility of the defence of the late ministers, and to determine whether they had or had not obtained his majesty's consent, to the introduction of the Catholic Bill; and shall content myself with expressing one sentiment, (and which I doubt not is become very general, from the experience and insight, now had of their views and inclinations) and which is, that whatever cause may have led to their disgrace and dismissal, I had it as a happy circumstance to the country at large, and a just reward of their apostacy and shameful dereliction of the principles and professions with which they have amused the country for so many years past.—I trust and hope—Mr. Cobbett, that you will not relax your exertions, so honorable to yourself, in exposing to the public view whatever may occur in the new, or any succeeding administration, that shall require your admirable animadversions.—I am Sir, &c. C. H. M.—*London 31st March, 1807.*

“*LEARNED LANGUAGES.*”

No. 21.

SIR,—I am one of those unfortunate dogs, whose nature has something in it so repugnant to Greek and Latin, that no time nor labour can make them assimilate. For 7 long years was I incessantly *Τυττω* ing it away, and for as long did my worthy preceptor, with Syntax in his left hand, and the birchen twig in his right, assiduously apply them *à priori* and *à posteriori* to my tender parchment, but all in vain. How have I smarted under the lash of Cicero's Eloquence! And I am sure that my blood, which Cæsar has so often shed, will rise hereafter in judgment against him. But, do not imagine, Sir, these years of unsuccessful drudgery have produced no effect. From Alpha to Omega, I hate the classics all; and



it is now in the exultation of my heart, that I congratulate you on the prospect of ultimate success in your undertaking.—Boldly to have planted the standard of revolt, and defied the tyrants even in their strongest fastnesses, was nobly done: at first, I feared to ask whether you survived the daring act, but now I breathe again, and hope one day to revel in the sweets of gratified revenge.—I cannot suppose, that you have proclaimed yourself without duly considering the means and strength which your antagonists possess. When I behold their fortifications, which time and folly have for ages past been contributing to render impregnable, they make me tremble. It needs not me to tell you, that those despots are intrenched in Universal Grammar to their teeth: their Auxiliaries are numerous and disciplined: every hero of antiquity will be summoned to furnish his quota. Cohort upon cohort of Latin quotations are embodied. The compact legions of Polyglots and Lexicons present an impenetrable front. This is but their first line; behind it range the Grecian Argyraspides in Phalanx. Declensions, Moods, and Tenses sixteen deep, whose innumerable close locked ranks and files extend in long and terrible array. At every pass and interval, redoubts of Commentaries, Notes and Glossaries are raised, between whose embrasures, that murderous Artillery the Parts of Speech, peep out ready to mash the invaders brains to atoms. In presence of such a formidable host I shrink involuntarily appalled. I trust that you are not unacquainted with the temper of this foe. A specimen of the crushing dictatorial authority, whose accumulated weight you will have to contend with, is afforded by your correspondent *Scoto Britannicus* (No. 19). With all the magnificence of privileged importance, he asserts that from the “*Learned Languages*” almost all the “*Modern Jargons*” are derived, without these cannot be understood, and wanting these, that perspicuity, elegance, energy and taste are not to be attained. Now, it must be confessed this *ipse dixit* carries force, when we reflect that all our *English Jargonists*, not omitting Shakespeare and Burns, were so notoriously skilled in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, Etymons and Roots. But, notwithstanding the deadly blows of Johnson’s ponderous Vocabulary, and Mr. Dalzel’s Latin Mace, I hope, Mr. Cobbett, you will still survive to prove that *Scoto*’s conclusions are not quite conclusive. From the long string of arguments (as he calls them) with which he threatens you, he culls out one “more cogent and unanswerable than all the rest,” to terminate his so-

lemn packthread. The cogency of this same argument you will notice when you think fit; meanwhile, I hope when next he condescends to communicate in *English Jargon*, he will explain what “*MORE unanswerable*” signifies. It is clear this learned *Dun—s Scotus* can instruct us in all the various *degrees of impossibility*; after which, his readers may or may not, as they deem it expedient, “cover their rears with his reasonings.”—But, Sir, have you marked the matchless arrogance of this Trencher Cap. He says, (and he is but the echo of the whole fraternity), unless we can explore with monkey-like facility, each root and branch of their vaunted tree of knowledge, (to me the *Bo-hon-Upas* of the understanding) that we are but “pitiful creatures, fit only to scrawl at desks, to keep shops, or to fill the places of ignorant and miserable peasants.” Why, what a sweep would this make! For, only trace the inference; nobility, gentility, and worth must fit the iron bedstead of this new *Procrustes* or chuse among the alternatives he presents—to be clerks or counter men, hewers of stone or drawers of water. I think the cup of their iniquity is full. To you, Sir, the champion of our cause, the vindicator of our wrongs, the asserter of our freedom, we turn with anxious eyes: remember, that nothing but extermination will appease the wrath of the unrelenting tyrants you combat. You have drawn the sword, then throw away the scabbard and advance. I cannot help fondly cherishing the belief, that I shall live to see their overwhelming insolence and scorn repaid with ample vengeance. I long for the day that is to see the lightning of your disquisitions against

“ ——— these frowzy squadrons hurl’d,  
“ To rush and sweep them from the world.”

For my part, alas! save a few Greek and Latin pellets, I can offer you no assistance, these seven years bondage withered all my pith, nothing but my prayers remain, which, depend upon it, shall be fervently offered up for your success, by your hearty well wisher,

DUNCE.

P. S. After the tide of victory, as you will think it cruel to deprive the hordes you have discomfited, not merely of the means of resistance, but of subsistence, it will then be for the legislature to consider of some way of employing them. Perhaps it may be thought advisable to allow the superiors and professors, at least a moderate stipend for keeping the best Translations of the Classics in repair. I know it will be a sinecure for each, and that it will make a large addition to our already grievous long list of placemen and pensioners, but it is inconsistent.



ent with the generosity of Englishmen to strike a fallen foe; besides, it may be observed, that time, at no remote period, will have reduced them to that number which government may think sufficient for the above-mentioned purpose.

#### FOREIGN OFFICIAL PAPERS.

##### CONTINENTAL WAR. — *Thirty-six Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Posen, Dec. 1.—The head-quarters of the Grand Duke of Berg were, on the 27th of November, at Lowicz. Gen. Benningsen, who commanded the Russian army, had, in the hope of anticipating the French, entered Warsaw, and pushed forward an advanced guard to take positions along the river Drizura.—On the 26th the out-posts of the respective armies fell in with each other, and the Russians were thrown into confusion. General Beaumont passed the Drizura to Lowicz, killed and wounded several Russian hussars, and made a regiment of Cossacks prisoners, and pursued the enemy to Blonie.—On the 27th some skirmishing took place between the advanced posts of the cavalry of both armies, when the Russians were pursued, and some taken prisoners.—On the 28th, towards evening, the Archduke of Berg entered Warsaw with his cavalry, and on the 29th the corps of Marshal Davoust advanced to the capital. The Russians had retreated over the Vistula, and had burnt the bridge after they had passed. It would be difficult to describe the enthusiasm of the Poles. Our entrance into the capital was quite a triumph, and it is impossible to form an idea of the zeal which the Poles of every rank display.—Patriotism and national spirit have not diminished in the hearts of this people, but have acquired new force amidst misfortune. The most fervent desire, the only wish of the Poles, is to become again a nation. The powerful abandon their castles, and come to implore with earnestness the restoration of their nation, and offer their children, their fortunes, and all their influence towards accomplishing that end. This spectacle is indeed interesting. They have already every where resumed their ancient dress, and their former customs.—Shall the Polish throne be re-established, and shall the great nation secure for it respect and independence? Shall she recall it to life from the grave? God only, who directs all human affairs, can resolve this great political question. But certainly never did more memorable, more important events, arise. From a congeniality of

sentiment, which does honour to the French, the few stragglers, who were guilty of excesses in other countries, have experienced so good a reception from the people here, that no severe regulations have been necessary to make them conduct themselves with propriety.—Our soldiers often observe, that the solitary wildernesses of Poland are very different from the smiling fields of their own country—but they immediately add, that the Poles are good. Indeed, the people of this country exhibit themselves in such a light, that it is impossible not to take an interest in their destiny.—The day after this Bulletin was published, namely, the memorable 2d of December, there was addressed, in the name of the Emperor, to the grand army, the following proclamation:

*Imperial Head-Quarters at Posen, Dec. 2, 1806.*

Soldiers!—A year ago, at this same hour, you were on the memorable field of Austerlitz. The scared cohorts of Russia fled defeated before you, or, surrounded, laid down their arms at the feet of their conquerors. To the moderation, and the (perhaps) blameable generosity, which overlooked the criminality of the third coalition, is the formation of a fourth to be ascribed. But the ally on whose military skill their principal hope rested, is already no more. His principal towns, his fortresses, his forage and ammunition magazines, 280 standards, 700 pieces of cannon, are in our power. Neither the Oder nor the Warta, the Desarts of Poland, nor the rude season of winter, have been capable of arresting for a moment our progress. You have braved all dangers, have surmounted them all, and every enemy has fled on your approach. In vain did the Russians wish to defend the capital of ancient and illustrious Poland. The French Eagles hover over the Vistula. The unfortunate, but brave Poles, on contemplating you, fancy they behold the celebrated legions of the Great Sobieski returning from a military expedition.—Soldiers! We shall not lay down our arms until a general peace has confirmed and secured the power of our allies; until it has restored to our commerce its freedom, and given back to us our colonies. On the Elbe and on the Oder we have re-conquered Pondicherry; all our possessions in India, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Spanish colonies. What right has Russia to hope that she shall hold the balance of destiny in her hand? What right has she to expect she should be placed in so favourable a situation? Shall there be a comparison made between



the Russians and us? Are we not then the soldiers of Austerlitz?

(Signed) NAPOLEON.

*Thirty-seventh Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Posen, Dec. 2.—The following are the particulars of the capitulation of Fort Czen-toskaw: 600 men of the garrison, 30 pieces of cannon, and some magazines, have fallen into our hands. A treasure has been found, consisting of a number of valuables which had been dedicated by the Poles to the Holy Virgin, as the tutelary guardian of the country. This treasure the Emperor has ordered to be given up to the original proprietors.—The part of the army at Warsaw remains fully satisfied with the patriotism of the people of that city.—This day the city of Posen gave a ball in honour of his Majesty, who remained present an hour. *Te Deum* was also performed to day, in consequence of its being the anniversary of his Majesty's coronation.

*Thirty-eighth Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Posen, Dec. 5.—Prince Jerome, who commands the army of the allies, after having closely blockaded Glogau, and caused batteries to be constructed around that place, proceeded with the Bavarian divisions of Wrede and Deroi towards Kalitsch, to watch the Russians, and left General Vandamme and the Wirtemberg corps to continue the siege of Glogau. The mortars, and several pieces of cannon, arrived on the 29th of November; they were immediately placed in battery. After a few hours bombardment, the place surrendered, and a capitulation was signed.—The allied Wirtemberg troops have displayed great gallantry. 2,500 men, considerable magazines of biscuit, corn, powder, nearly 200 pieces of cannon, are the results of this conquest, which is so important, particularly on account of the excellence of the works and the situation of the fortress. It is the capital of Lower Silesia. The Russians have refused battle on this side of Warsaw, and have repassed the Vistula. The Grand Duke of Berg has passed that river in pursuit of them, and has taken the suburb of Praga. The Emperor has consequently given orders to Prince Jerome to advance on his right, towards Breslau, and to invest that place, which must also soon fall into our power. The 7 fortresses of Silesia will be successively attacked and blockaded. When the temper of the troops which are

in those places is considered, no one can expect them to make a long resistance.—The little fort of Culmbach, called Plassenburg, has been blockaded by a battalion of Bavarians. Being furnished with provisions for several months, there was no reason to expect that it should have surrendered soon. The Emperor ordered artillery to be prepared at Cronach and Forchein for battering this fort. On the 24th of Nov. 22 pieces of cannon were placed in battery, which determined the governor to surrender the place. M. De Beckers, colonel of the 6th Bavarian regiment of the infantry of the line, who commanded the blockade, displayed much skill and activity in the situation in which he was placed.—By the articles of capitulation of Plassenburgh, the Prussian garrison were to remain prisoners of war, at the disposal of the King of Bavaria. The officers to be released on their parole. The sick soldiers to remain till recovered. The invalids to retain their allowances, and to be removed to Bayreuth. All the pictures and genealogical tables relative to the royal family of Prussia, were to be preserved in the depot for the King of Prussia.—There were found in Plassenburg, 68 pieces of cannon, 64 quintals of powder, 600lb. of salt-petre, 400 quintals of lead, 40 quintals of bar iron, 1144 muskets of different kinds, 700 old muskets, 74 carbines, 200 pistols, 200 sabres, 29 pair of old colours, 29 old standards, 46 new standards, 150 cartouche boxes, 8000 flints, 2,700 hedge bills, 8 caissons, 14 trains, 9 forges, 9 kettle drums, &c. &c.—The troops consisted of Major-general Baron d'Uttenhosen, 4 majors, 7 captains, 7 lieutenants, 600 privates of the line, and 150 invalids.

*Thirty-ninth Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Posen, Dec. 7.—A courier has arrived with intelligence to the Emperor, that the Russians have declared war against the Porte; that Choczim and Bender are surrounded by their troops; that they have suddenly passed the Dneister, and advanced as far as Jassy. It is General Michelson who commands the Russian army in Wallachia. The Russian army, commanded by General Benigzen, has evacuated the Vistula, and seems inclined to bury itself in the interior.—Marshal Davoust has passed the Vistula, and has established his head quarters before Praga. His advanced posts are on the Bug. The Grand Duke of Berg remains at Warsaw. The Emperor still has his head quarters at Posen.



*Fortieth Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Posen, Dec. 9.—Marshal Ney has passed the Vistula, and entered Thorn on the 6th. He bestows particular encomiums upon Colonel Savary, who, at the head of the 14th reg. of infantry, and the grenadiers and voltigeurs of the 96th, and the 6th light infantry, was the first to pass that river. At Thorn he came to action with the Prussians, whom, after a trifling affair, he compelled to evacuate the place. Some were killed, and twenty made prisoners.—This affair gave occasion to a very singular exploit. The river, 200 roods in breadth, was covered with ice; the vessel occupied by our advanced guard stuck fast and could not be moved, when a number of Polish seamen from the other side of the river evinced a disposition to venture through a shower of balls, in order to get the vessel afloat. In this intention they were opposed by some Prussian sailors, and a battle with fists ensued between them. The Poles succeeded in throwing the Prussians into the water, and brought the French vessel to the other side. The Emperor has inquired respecting the names of these brave fellows, to reward them.—This day the Emperor received the deputation from Warsaw, consisting of M. Gutakouski, Grand Chamberlain of Lithuania, Knight of a Polish Order; Gouzenski, Lieut. Gen., and Lubenski, Knights of the same Order; and Alexander Potocki, Knight of the Orders of St. Stanislaus and Lusweski.

*Forty-first Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Posen, Dec. 14.—The General of Brigade Belair, of the corps of Marshal Ney, left Thorn on the 9th, and advanced upon Galup. The 6th battalion of light infantry, and Capt. Schoeni, with 60 men of the third regiment of hussars, met a party of 400 cavalry belonging to the enemy. The two advanced bodies immediately came to an engagement. The Prussians lost an officer and 5 dragoons taken prisoners, and had 30 men killed, whose horses we took. Marshal Ney praises highly the conduct of Captain Schoeni on this occasion.—On the 11th, at 6 in the morning, a cannonade was heard on the side of the river Bug. Marshal Davoust had ordered Général Gauthier to pass that river at the mouth of the Urka, opposite the village of Okunin. The 25th of the line and the 89th having passed, were already covered by a *tête-du-pont*, and had advanced half a league farther, to the village of Pomikuwo, when a Russian division presented it-

self, for the purpose of storming the village. Its efforts were useless, and it was repulsed with considerable loss. We had about 20 men killed or wounded.—The bridge of Thorn, which is constructed upon wooden piles, is re-established. They are now busied in re-establishing the fortifications of that town. The bridge from Warsaw to the suburb of Praga is completed: it is a bridge of boats. They are forming an entrenched camp at the suburb of Praga. The General of Engineers Chasseloup, has the chief direction of those works.—On the 10th, the Marshal Augereau passed the Vistula, between Zakroczym and Utrata. His detachments are employed upon the right bank, in covering themselves by entrenchments. The Russians appear to have forces at Pul-tusk.—Marshal Bessieres advances from Thorn with the second corps of reserve of the cavalry, composed of General Tilly's division of light cavalry, of the dragoons of Generals Grouchy and Sanue, and of the cuirassiers of General Hautpoult. Messrs. Lucchessini and De Zastrow, Plenipotentiaries of the King of Prussia, passed through Thorn on the 10th, to join their Master at Koningsberg.—A Prussian battalion, of the regiment of De Klock, has deserted in a body from the village of Brok: it arrived at our posts by different roads. It is composed partly of Prussians and Poles. All are indignant at the treatment that they receive from the Russians. 'Our Prince,' they say, 'has sold us to the Russians, we will not go with them'—The enemy has burned the fine suburbs of Breslau: many women and children have perished in the flames. Prince Jerome has given succour to those unfortunate inhabitants. Humanity has triumphed over the laws of war, which prescribe, that one should drive back again into a besieged town those useless mouths that the enemy wish to send away. The bombardment has been commenced. General Gouvion is named Governor of Warsaw.

*Forty-second Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Posen, Dec. 15.—The bridge over the Narew, at its confluence with the Bug, is now finished: the *tête-du-pont* is finished, and protected with cannon. The bridge over the Vistula, between Zakroczym and Utrata is also finished: the *tête-du-pont*, protected by batteries, is a formidable work. The Russian armies come in the direction of Grodno and Bielock, along the Narew and the Bug. The head quarters of their



divisions were on the 10th at Poltusk, upon the Narew. General Dulauloi is Governor of Thorn.—The 8th corps of the grand army, commanded by Marshal Mortier, is advancing. Its right is at Stettin, its left at Rostock, and its head quarters at Anclam. The grenadiers of the reserve of General Oudinot are arriving at Custrin. The division of cuirassiers, lately formed under the command of General Espagnac, is now at Berlin. The Italian division of General Lecchi is to join at Magdeburgh. The corps of the Grand Duke of Baden is at Stettin. In 15 days it may be placed in the line. The hereditary Prince has constantly followed the head quarters, and was present at every affair. The Polish division of Zayenscheck, which was organised at Hagenau, is 6000 men strong: it is now at Leipzic, to get its cloathing. His Majesty has ordered a regiment to be raised in the Prussian states, on the other side of the Elbe, which is to assemble at Munster: Prince Hohenzollern Sigmaringen is colonel of that corps.—Peace with the Elector of Saxony, and with the Duke of Saxe Weimar, has been signed at Posen. All the Princes of Saxony have been admitted into the confederation of the Rhine. His Majesty has disapproved of the levy of contributions in the states of Saxe Gotha and Saxe Meinungen: he has ordered the restitution of what has been raised. Those princes who have not been at war with France, and who have not furnished contingents to Prussia, were not subject to war contributions.—The army has taken possession of the country of Mecklenburg. This is a consequence of the treaty signed at Schwerin, on the 25th of Oct. 1805. By that treaty the Prince of Mecklenburgh granted a passage to the Russian troops commanded by General Tolstoy.—The season is astonishing. It does not freeze; the sun appears every day, and it is quite autumn weather.—The Emperor sets out this night for Warsaw.

*Forty-third Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Kutno, Dec. 17.—The Emperor has arrived at Kutno, at four o'clock in the afternoon, after having travelled all night in the calochees (a sort of carriage) of the country, as the thaw makes it impossible to travel in the common carriages. The caloche in which Duroc, Grand Marshal of the Palace, travelled, was overturned. That officer has been severely hurt in the shoulder, but his hurt is not dangerous. This accident will oblige him to keep his bed for eight or ten

days.—The *têtes-du-pont* of Praga, of Zakroczym, of Narew, and of Thorn, are acquiring every day a greater degree of strength. The Emperor will arrive at Warsaw to-morrow.—The Vistula being extremely broad, the bridges are every where 3 or 400 toises in length, which makes the labour very considerable.

*Forty-fourth Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Warsaw, Dec. 21.—Yesterday the Emperor inspected the works of Praga, where 8 fine redoubts, with palisadoes, bastions, &c. inclose a space of 1500 toises, and form, upon the whole, the entrenched camp.—The Vistula is one of the largest rivers in the world. The Bug, though considerably smaller, is still larger than the Seine. The bridge over the Bug is completed. Gen. Gauthier, with the 25th and 85th regiments of infantry occupies the *tête du pont*, which Gen. Chascloup has fortified with great skill: so that this *tête du pont*, which is nearly 400 toises in extent, together with the morasses and the river, inclose an entrenched camp which is capable of covering the whole army upon the right bank, and protecting it from any attempt by the enemy. A brigade of the light cavalry of the reserve has skirmishes with the Russian cavalry every day.—On the 18th Marshal Davoust felt the necessity of strengthening and improving his camp upon the right bank of the river, and likewise occupying a small island at the mouth of the Urka. The enemy perceived the convenience of this post, and a heavy fusillade immediately commenced between the advanced posts; however, the conquest of the island remained with the French. Our loss consisted of a few wounded. The officer of the engineers, Clouet, a young man of great promise, received a ball in the breast.—On the 19th, a regiment of Cossacks, assisted by the Russian hussars, endeavoured to surprise the picquet of light cavalry at the *tête du pont* of the Bug; but the picquet had taken such a position as secured it against any surprise. The first regiment of hussars, and a colonel, with a squadron of the 13th, immediately coming to the assistance of the picquet, the enemy were thrown into confusion. In this trifling affair we had 3 or 4 men wounded, but the colonel of the Cossacks was killed and thirty men; 25 horses fell into our hands. There are no men so wretched and cowardly as the Cossacks; they are a scandal to human nature. They pass the Bag, and violate the Austrian neutrality every day, merely to plunder a house



in Galicia, or to compel the inhabitants to give them brandy, which they drink with great avidity. But since the late campaign, our cavalry is accustomed to the mode of attack made use of by these wretches, and notwithstanding their numbers, and their hideous cry on these occasions, they await them without alarm, and it is well known that 2000 of these wretches are not equal to the attack of a squadron of our cavalry. — Marshal Augereau passed the Vistula at Utratta. General Laivesse entered Plonsk, after drawing out the enemy. — Marshal Soult passed the same river at Vizogrod. — Marshal Bessieres was at Kikol on the 18th, with the second corps of the cavalry of reserve. His advanced guard is at Serpez. There have been several affairs between our cavalry and the Prussian hussars, of whom a great number have been made prisoners. The right bank of the Vistula is quite cleared. — Marshal Ney, with his light corps, supports Marshal Bessieres: and his right, at the same time, extends to that under the command of Marshal the Prince of Ponte Corvo. — Thus every corps is in motion, and if the enemy remains in his position, a battle will take place in a few days. With God's help, the issue cannot be uncertain. The Russian army is commanded by Gen. Kamenskoy, an old man about 75 years of age. The Generals Buxhowden and Benningsen command under him. — General Michelson has, beyond a doubt, penetrated into Moldavia, and there are accounts that he arrived at Jassy on the 29th of Nov. We are assured that his generals took Bender by storm, and put every one to the sword. Here behold war declared against the Porte without reason or pretext! But at St. Petersburg it was thought that the moment had arrived when France and Prussia, the two powers who had the greatest interest in preserving the independence of the Porte, being at war, was the most favourable period for subjugating the Turkish empire. Still the events of one month have defeated that project, and to these events the Porte shall be indebted for its preservation. — The Grand Duke of Berg has a fever, but he is better. The weather is as mild as at Paris in the month of October, but rainy, which makes it inconvenient. We have taken measures for the delivery of a sufficient quantity of wine, in order to support the vigour of the troops. — The palace of the King of Poland, at Warsaw, is a fine edifice, and well furnished. There are several noble palaces and private houses in this city. Our hospitals are well established, which is no small advantage in this country.

The enemy seems to have a number of sick; they also lose greatly by deserters; and of the Prussians we hear nothing, for even whole corps of them have deserted, to avoid that continual contempt which they might expect among the Russians.

*Forty-fifth Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Paluky, Dec. 27. — The Russian General Benningsen had the command of an army which was estimated at 60,000 men. At first he intended to cover Warsaw; but he took a lesson from the intelligence of the occurrences which had taken place in Prussia, and determined to retreat towards the Russian frontiers. Without having been compelled almost to fight a single battle, the French entered Warsaw, passed the Vistula, and occupied Praga. In the mean time Field Marshal Kamenskoy joined the Russian army, just at the moment when General Benningsen's corps formed a junction with that under Buxhowden. He was indignant at the retreat of the Russians, conceiving that it tended to sully the honour of his country's arms, and he accordingly made a movement in advance — Prussia remonstrated with the most earnest importunity; and complained, that after all the promises of support made to her, she was abandoned; representing, that the way to Berlin was not by Grodno, Olita, or Brezse; that her subjects had begun to abate in their zeal for their sovereign; and that the habit of beholding the throne of Berlin in the possession of the French was dangerous to him and favourable to the enemy. The Russians not only ceased their retrograde movement, but they again began to advance. On the 5th of December General Benningsen moved forward his head-quarters to Pultusk. The orders issued were to prevent the French from passing the Narew, to retake Praga, and to occupy the banks of the Vistula, until the moment when more important offensive operations could be adopted. — The junction of Generals Kamenskoy, Buxhowden, and Benningsen, was celebrated at the Palace of Sierock with rejoicings and illuminations, which were descried from the steeples of Warsaw. Nevertheless at the moment when the enemy were cheering themselves with festivals, the Narew was passed. 800 Frenchmen having suddenly crossed that river at its junction with the Ukra, entrenched themselves the same night; and when the enemy appeared next morning, with the intention of forcing them back into the river, they found themselves



too late. The French were secure against every event. Being informed of this change in the enemy's operations, the Emperor left Posen on the 10th; at the same moment he put his Army in motion. Every report which had been received of the movements of the Russians gave him to understand that they designed to resume offensive operations. Marshal Ney had been for several days master of Thorn: he united the different corps of his army at Gallup. Marshal Bessieres, with the second corps of the cavalry of reserve, consisting of the divisions of dragoons of Sahuc and Grouchy, and the division of Hautpoul's cuirassiers, marched from Thorn to proceed to Blezun. The Marshal Prince of Ponle Corvo marched with his corps to support them. Marshal Soult passed the Vistula opposite Plock; and Marshal Angereau passed at Znckrocyn, where the utmost exertion was made to establish a bridge. The same activity was exerted in constructing that on the Narew. On the 22d the bridge on the Narew was completed. All the reserve of cavalry instantly passed the Vistula at Prega, on their march to the Narew, where Marshal Davoust had collected the whole of his corps. At one o'clock in the morning of the 23d the Emperor set out from Warsaw, and passed the Narew at nine. On reconnoitring the Ukra, and the considerable entrenchments thrown up by the enemy, he ordered a bridge to be thrown across at the confluence of the Narew and Ukra.—By the zeal of the General of Artillery, the bridge was completed in two hours.

—  
*Forty-sixth Bulletin of the Grand French Army.*

Golymn, Dec. 23.—Marshal Ney, charged with executing the manœuvres by which he was to drive the Prussian Lieut. Gen. Lestocq from Wrka, to outflank him, and by these means to cut off his communications with the Russians, has executed these movements with his accustomed ability and intrepidity. On the 23d, Gen. Marchand's division moved to Gurzno. On the 24th, the enemy was pursued to Kunzbrock. On the 25th the division came to an action, by which the enemy's rear suffered some loss. On the 26th, the enemy having collected at Soldau and Miawa, Marshal Ney was determined to advance and attack him. The

Prussians were in possession of Soldau, with 6000 infantry, and about 1000 cavalry, and, being defended by morasses and other obstacles about the place, they thought themselves secure against any attack. All these difficulties, however, were surmounted by the 69th and 76th regiments. The enemy defended themselves in all the streets of the place, and where every where driven with fixed bayonets. Gen. Letoscq, observing the small number of the troops that had attacked him, wished to retake the place. In the course of the night he made four successive attacks, without effect. He afterwards retired to Neidenburg. Six pieces of cannon, some colours, and a great number of prisoners are the effects of this affair at Soldau. Marshal Ney praises Gen. Vonderwelt, who was wounded. He also makes particular mention of Col. Brunn, of the 69th, whose behaviour was highly encouraging. On the same day the 59th marched to Lauterburg. During the action at Soldau, Gen. Marchand's division drove the enemy from Miawa, where also a great action took place. Marshal Bessieres had already taken possession of Biezun, with the second corps of cavalry, on the 19th. The enemy feeling the importance of this post, and observing that the left wing of the French army wished to cut the Prussians off from the Russians, made an attempt to retake the place; this gave rise to the engagement at Biezun. On the 23d, at o'clock, the enemy approached by various ways, Marshal Bessieres had placed the only two companies of infantry he had upon the bridge; when seeing the enemy approach in great numbers, he ordered General Grouchy to advance with his division to meet them. The enemy had already made himself master of the village of Carmeden, into which he had already thrown a battalion of infantry. Being attacked by General Grouchy's division, the enemy's line was soon broke; the Prussian infantry and cavalry, 9000 strong, were thrown into confusion, and driven into the morasses. Five hundred prisoners, five pieces of cannon, and two standards, are the fruits of this attack. Marshal Bessieres bestows the highest encomiums upon General Grouchy, General Rouget, and his Chief of the Staff General Roussel; Renie, the Chef d'Escadron of the 6th dragoons, distinguished himself. M. Launay, Captain of the select company of that regiment, is killed.